

# State Rep. Hebl: Statement on action by the Committee on Constitution and Ethics

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(Sun Prairie) – On March 10, 2021, along party line votes, the Assembly Committee on Constitution and Ethics passed several measures: a call for a constitutional convention to draft Constitutional Amendments regarding Term Limits, a Balanced Budget Amendment, and to “limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government”; several bills regarding COVID vaccinations; and a bill that bogs down disbursement of federal COVID relief fund in tons of bureaucratic red tape. In response, Rep. Gary Hebl (D-Sun Prairie) released the following statements regarding the bills:

**On Assembly Joint Resolution 9, calling for term limits, a Balanced Budget Amendment, and limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government:**

“Calling for a constitutional amendment is an incredibly bad idea, especially for the stated reasons. There are no rules limiting the convention to its intended topics and could even potentially lead to creating a new Constitution. The bill’s author and another member of the Committee on Constitution and Ethics both endorsed the idea of passing the bill first and then hashing out what the parameters would be later. Essentially, their stance on the Joint Resolution is “we have to pass it to find out what’s in it.” That is just not how such an important matter should be handled. The risks to the United States Constitution are too great to allow for this to happen.

“Term limits and imposing a balanced budget may sound like good ideas, but in

practical terms they are a disaster. Imposing term limits will mean a constant turnover of elected officials. This will place enormous power into the hands of staff and lobbyists, who are not elected by the people nor subject to term limits. Therefore, they would have no accountability and would hold too much sway.

“I asked the bill’s authors how a Balanced Budget would account for emergencies such as natural disasters or wars. Their answer was that there would be a rainy-day fund and would allow for a vote for emergency spending. This was an incredibly unsatisfying answer. Just take look at Wisconsin. Our rainy-day fund sits at almost one billion dollars, and yet during a once-a-century health emergency, Wisconsin Republicans refuse to let us touch it to help the people of our state. Count me skeptical that a Congress full of Ted Cruzes, Josh Hawleys, and Jim Jordans would vote to authorize use of a rainy-day fund or any emergency spending for a drought in California or a hurricane on the East Coast.”

### **On Assembly Bill 149, calling for legislative oversight of federal COVID relief funds:**

“I think it’s laughable that Wisconsin Republicans want us to trust them with COVID relief funds when they took an 8-month vacation from doing *anything* about the spread of COVID in Wisconsin. Why should we allow these legislators, who have already showed a lack of urgency in addressing COVID, to hamper relief with unnecessary bureaucratic red tape? Republicans have shown that they will slow relief if it makes Governor Evers look bad. As usual, they are thinking more about their election prospects and retaining power than they are about helping Wisconsinites. They spent 2020 campaigning instead of passing legislation to help Wisconsin. They will absolutely turn COVID relief into a partisan game, and we should not let them. People in Wisconsin need relief immediately and cannot afford more Republican games.”