

Common Cause Wisconsin: Tim Cullen to step down as Common Cause Wisconsin chair

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Former State Senator Tim Cullen announced today that he is retiring — as of September 15th — as the Chair of the Common Cause Wisconsin (CC/WI) State Governing Board. Cullen of Janesville, who is 78, has been chair since 2018 and a CC/WI board member since 2016, as well as earlier, from 2008 to 2010, before stepping down to run for the State Senate in 2010.

“It has been a great honor to be Chair of Common Cause Wisconsin. However, it is time to step aside as we have many other qualified board members who can take my place,” Cullen said.

“I am proud that we have added more racial, gender, and political diversity to the board during my tenure,” he added.

Cullen, a Democrat, served two non-consecutive stints in the Wisconsin State Senate. He was elected in 1974 and served from 1975 to 1987, including as the Senate Majority Leader from 1982-87. He was appointed by Republican Gov. Tommy Thompson as the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health in Family Services in 1987. After nearly 20 years as the Vice President of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin, he was elected to the Wisconsin State Senate again in 2010 and served a single four-year term before retiring.

“Common Cause Wisconsin, with our more than 7,700 statewide members and activists, has been a leading proponent for the end of partisan gerrymandering, the protection and expansion of voting rights and for a more independent, impartial state judiciary, including stronger judicial recusal rules,” Cullen said.

"I regret that gerrymandering lives on in Wisconsin. Democracy is severely damaged when legislators draw maps to guarantee themselves their jobs for 10 years. Their jobs are part time, and yet gerrymandering guarantees them about \$700,000 in salary and per diem over those 10 years. How many Wisconsin workers can guarantee themselves their job for the next 10 years?" Cullen emphasized.

Common Cause Wisconsin had co-chairs until about 10 years ago. Cullen said he supports returning to having Co-Chairs so that the organization can be led by two people with different political backgrounds, "to further signal that we are not a partisan organization," he concluded.

The CC/WI Board will meet on September 15th in the Capitol in Madison to elect new Co-Chairs. Cullen said he plans to stay on the board.

In addition to Cullen, the CC/WI State Advisory Board includes: Penny Bernard Schaber of Appleton, David Deininger of Monroe, Mary Lynne Donohue of Sheboygan, Kristin Hansen of Waukesha, William Hotz of Brookfield, Kriss Marion of Blanchardville, E. Michael McCann of Pewaukee, Calvin Potter of Sheboygan Falls, Wanda Sloan of Beloit, and Roger Utnehmer of Wausau.