

Joint Committee on Finance Democratic Members: Joint Finance Republicans take extended spring break

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Madison - Today the Republican-controlled Joint Finance Committee met without considering funding and stewardship requests pending before the committee that are important to citizens across Wisconsin. Anonymous Republican objections, along with their failure to schedule hearings, leave these vital requests in limbo.

Republican inaction negatively impacts entities like the Wisconsin Arts Board and the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. A recent [memo](#) compiled by the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau shows the complete list of all items currently pending and awaiting committee action.

On February 18th, Democratic committee members submitted a [letter](#) to the co-chairs requesting a hearing and approval of the Wisconsin Arts Board's pending 13.10 request for \$109,200 GPR, as well as another \$109,200 in federal match funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). To date, we have not received a reply.

Since funding for the Arts Board has not been released by Republicans, grant awards to Wisconsin arts organizations continue to be delayed. Further delay risks the distribution of grants or a reduction of the amount of each grant.

Anonymous Republican objections continue to negatively impact Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. Objections have been holding up projects for multiple years, but a more recent example pertains to the Cedar Gorge-Clay Bluffs Preserve. The property contains three-quarters of a mile of Lake Michigan shoreline and bluffs, surrounding wetlands, white cedar woods, and critical wildlife habitats. Preserving this ecosystem has received broad bipartisan support.

A Milwaukee Journal Sentinel [article](#) recently featured the project.

On April 7th, Democratic committee members submitted a [letter](#) to the co-chairs asking for a hearing and approval of this important stewardship project, which has been delayed by an anonymous Republican objection since last July. Again, to date, we have not received a reply.

While these are not the only requests pending before the committee, they serve as examples of important issues Wisconsinites care about and Joint Finance Republicans have ignored.

With Joint Finance Republicans continuing their extended spring break, Democratic members of the committee remain committed to supporting these important requests and hold the co-chairs accountable for their inaction.