

Knudson to resign from Elections Commission

Posted on Wednesday, May 25, 2022

Former GOP state Rep. Dean Knudson Wednesday announced his resignation from the Elections Commission once a replacement is in place.

Knudson, appointed to the commission by Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, said during a late afternoon meeting it has become clear to him that he's no longer effective in his role as a Republican on the body.

He moved — and the commission approved — putting off selecting a new chair until a replacement is selected.

Knudson said he wasn't interested in the role.

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

"It's been made clear to me from the highest level of the Republican Party of Wisconsin that there's a deep desire that I not be the chair. That's fine," Knudson said without offering specifics.

Under commission rules, the next chair must be a Republican after Dem Ann Jacobs served in the role for the past two years. The clerks who serve on the six-member commission aren't eligible. That leaves GOP appointee Bob Spindell or Knudson's replacement as the only two eligible.

Spindell, an outspoken member who has been publicly campaigning to become the next chair, again said today he wants the job. After Knudson announced his resignation, Spindell read a statement laying out his case for why he believes he should be the next chair.

Knudson urged a delay in the leadership vote until his replacement is in place, while

Spindell wanted to move ahead with the vote, which would've meant he would become the new leader. But the commission voted 5-1 to delay the leadership vote until its June 10 meeting.

Knudson helped author the law abolishing the Government Accountability Board and creating the Elections and Ethics commissions. He's also become the focus of ire for some Republicans over his vocal defense of the commission and how he administered the 2020 election. That includes his various statements refuting the false claims by former President Trump of widespread fraud in Wisconsin.

He also is one of five commissioners that the Racine County sheriff recommended face felony charges after the body voted to suspend a requirement that local clerks send special voting deputies to nursing homes before sending absentee ballots to residents who request them. The move was taken during the COVID-19 pandemic as various nursing homes declined to allow various people inside the facilities for fear of spreading the virus among their elderly populations.

Knudson said during the meeting he's been branded a RINO — Republican In Name Only — for telling the truth about Trump's loss.

"I'll put my conservative record up against anyone in the state of Wisconsin and yet now I've been branded a RINO," Knudson said. "It really comes because my two core values are to practice service above self and to display personal integrity. To me, that integrity means telling the truth even when that truth is painful."