

Rep. Brostoff: Releases statement on today's informational hearing on the DSPS licensing backlog

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MADISON - In reaction to today's informational hearing on the licensing backlog at the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) held in front of the Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform, Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

"Today's informational hearing on the licensing backlog at DSPS reinforced what everyone working on this issue already knew: this is a manufactured crisis, and one that can be easily remedied. As was made clear today, the main issues contributing to the licensing backlog are the same they have been for *years* now - year after year, Republicans have refused to provide DSPS with adequate staffing levels to process licensing applications. It started with the Walker/Kleefisch administration, who cut multiple staff positions and tens of millions of dollars in funding for the Department (despite the fact that DSPS actually *makes* money, even contributing 10% of its revenues to the general fund), and has continued with Legislative Republicans the last two budget cycles. Twice now, Governor Evers has requested adequate staffing levels and funding for DSPS in both of his biennial budgets, and Republicans have stripped those budget items both times. So to be very clear, any 'crisis' in licensing over at DSPS is one of Republican design.

"Far too many Republicans are either directly involved or at least complicit in these attacks on DSPS, denying them the staff they need to thrive and, in doing so, manufacturing the ongoing licensure crisis in Wisconsin. As a result, this manufactured crisis has now become one of the worst in the country. But worst of all, it appears that these Republicans do not actually want to solve the issues surrounding licensing at all - instead, it appears that they want to use this

manufactured crisis as a means to undermine professional licensing in general, and deliver a win for their anti-licensing big money donors. The fact that avowed anti-licensing organizations like the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) and the Badger Institute were invited to speak today in the first place, and then given the chance to speak *long* before DSPS was shows us exactly where Republican priorities and affinities lie.

“If Republicans *actually* wanted to help solve the licensing backlog at DSPS, they would have held this hearing at the *beginning* of this Session, giving us plenty of time to engage with stakeholders, come up with real solutions, and implement those solutions. If they wanted to solve the backlog, they would’ve reached out to DSPS and the Governor, had straightforward conversations, and provided the funding and staffing that DSPS needs and has requested the last two budget cycles.

“Despite all of that, I hope that Republican members of the Committee were actually listening to the testimony presented today. There *is* a licensing backlog at DSPS, and it *is* affecting professionals around our state – professionals who need and want us to come together and fix these issues. But luckily, as I said multiple times today, these issues are eminently fixable: we just need Republicans to provide adequate funding and staffing for DSPS and actively allow the Department to do their job and get Wisconsin’s licensed professionals to work.

“This manufactured crisis is hurting everyday people in Wisconsin. Republican politicians need to get over their petty partisan politics, work with Democrats, stop stifling DSPS, and let Wisconsin thrive.”