

Rep. Hebl: Statement on Wisconsin GOP's anti-democracy push

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(MADISON) On Thursday, February 24, Wisconsin Assembly Republicans passed a slew of bills attacking democracy and fair elections. Rep. Gary Hebl (Sun Prairie) released the following statement in response:

It happens every time a Democrat wins. We always hear false claims of widespread voter fraud, because Republicans believe that any Democratic victory is inherently illegitimate. It has always been a dangerous position to stake out, and unfortunately it has been taken to a new low by today's extremist Republican Party.

Republican policies are increasingly unpopular. That is why the 2020 GOP platform was, literally, nothing. They put forward no ideas, and were banking on Donald Trump to carry them over the line. The same is shaping up for 2022- Republicans are putting forth no policy platform. They cannot, because it would be massively unpopular. Because their policies are unpopular and their base is shrinking, they know that to win they need to limit who gets to vote. That is why we see the attacks on democracy we have seen in Wisconsin and across the country.

The elections bills Republicans put forward yesterday will not make voting easier or elections more secure. They are thinly veiled attempts to disenfranchise voters and rig the system so that Republicans always win. They have already taken a huge step in that direction by gerrymandering legislative lines to ensure perpetual Republican majorities in the Legislature- even though they are out of step with many mainstream Wisconsin views. Now they have their sights set on manipulating statewide races, and they are going to stop at nothing to ensure that Wisconsin becomes an anti-democracy state through casting doubt on elections results and through outright voter suppression.

Most Republicans don't truly believe anything went wrong with how the 2020 elections were run- they are just throwing a tantrum because their candidate lost. They are grasping at straws to try to justify a crackdown on the election process by pretending that drop boxes aren't secure or that a voter giving their completed ballot to a clerk while at a park is scandalous. I'm sure they would just prefer that we live in a single party state, and they be perpetually in power, but that is not how our system works.

We have to continue to fight back against cynical, bad faith Republican attacks on our democracy. I don't believe it is hyperbole to say that our democracy sits on the precipice of disaster. We must never give ground to anti-democracy zealots.

Yesterday's session displayed the stark contrast between the two parties- Democrats fighting to ensure every voice is heard, and Republicans attempting to subvert American democracy. I can only hope that in the end, American Democracy will win out over power hungry radicals.