

Dane County Executive Parisi: Dane County Human Services confirmation process

Posted on Friday, Apr 28, 2023

>> **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.](#)**

Dane County Executive Joe Parisi issued the following statement today regarding the County Board's process to review the nomination of State Representative Shelia Stubbs as Director of the Department of Human Services:

"Members of the Dane County Board last night went on record saying an African American woman with a Masters' degree in management and Bachelors' degrees in criminal justice and political science, 16 years in county elected office, who has lived experience volunteering in community centers and working for decades to fight poverty and racism while advocating for those less fortunate is not qualified to lead the county's work in serving vulnerable populations.

"What occurred last night was unprecedented.

"The role of the County Board in reviewing nominees to lead county departments is straight forward. Board members are to evaluate whether an individual nominated by the County Executive is qualified for the job at hand. Representative Stubbs' resume speaks for itself and the actions of Board leadership since the moment I made this recommendation have been unprecedented to any previous department nomination that I and other County Executives have offered. Rep. Stubbs and the community she represents have seen this unprecedented response, political tactics under the false guise of process, and like any population that struggles to achieve equity and only seeks fairness have been understandably frustrated.

"The actions of certain members of this Board toward Representative Stubbs reflect poorly on the institution we all took an oath to uphold. At a time when decency and

kindness toward our fellow persons are at a deficiency, as elected leaders we have a responsibility to rise above and show future generations how to conduct ourselves in a manner becoming of the offices we were elected to hold.

“The integrity of our democracy is rooted in honesty. Here’s the truth. The County Board Chair, the Chair of the Health and Human Needs (HHN) Committee, and a number of member of this Board have known for days what Representative Stubbs’ intentions were should she be confirmed as Human Services Director. She spoke directly with several members of that committee many days before the hearing – and met for hours in person over a week ago with the chair of HHN. The frame of the questions last night made it clear the content of those conversations were not relayed publicly nor accurately. Untruths through omission are not a reflection of the good faith required for democracy to function. Representative Stubbs has been mindful of the timing of her confirmation and the impact it could have on the state budget process. She had shared with Supervisors her intention to submit her letter of resignation to the Assembly as soon as she’s confirmed. They knew very well that any overlap in the two positions if it occurred would have only been for a few weeks. Instead, they chose to weaponize the careful balance Representative Stubbs tried to walk to protect interests broader than those of county government.

“Unfortunately, the tone and tenor of the process to this point offers the latest illustration as to why highly capable, qualified, and experienced public servant managers are leaving Dane County government. We must do better.

“Representative Stubbs’ confirmation was not evaluated on its objective merits last night, as is the Board’s charge in reviewing appointments. Instead, it was politicized in the same manner as the legislature did to Governor Evers’ cabinet secretaries for years. This isn’t what Dane County government has been and if we are sincere about increasing public engagement – and frankly achieving equity – in the future, the behaviors seen surrounding this nomination will have the exact opposite chilling effect on democratic participation.”