

Jerry Hanson: Wisconsin's gerrymandered Legislature is a GOP playground

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Wisconsin was always a laboratory for democracy until the Walker years. Walker's legislators created a new electoral map in secret that guaranteed Republican seats would never drop below 50%. They quickly gutted collective bargaining rights for public employees.

Shielded from accountability to their voters Wisconsin's legislature enacted an agenda that defied the preferences of most of their constituents. The Republicans passed unpopular laws preventing local governments from setting their own rules such as environmental protections and gun violence protection laws.

Republicans blocked efforts to raise the state minimum wage despite clear support for a higher wage among Wisconsin residents.

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The legislature refused to expand Medicaid, a decision opposed by majorities of both parties and caused 85,000 Wisconsinites to lose access to affordable healthcare.

Two-thirds of Wisconsinites want the rich to pay higher taxes, yet the Republican legislature passed a series of tax cuts favoring the state's wealthy residents.

Nearly 75% of Wisconsin's residents supported increased funding for public schools. The Republicans enacted the biggest cut to education in Wisconsin's history.

The legislature has repeatedly blocked bills to help student loan borrowers refinance their loans. More than 750,000 people in the state have federal student loan debt.

Voting rights were continuously suppressed with restrictions placed on early voting, absentee voting, voter drop boxes and hours and locations for voting.

After Walker lost his bid for a third term the Republican controlled legislature approved a sweeping package of bills weakening the powers of the incoming Democratic governor and attorney general.

The worst abuse of the Republican Legislative playground occurred on December 14, 2020 when 10 Republicans were allowed to meet secretly within the closed Capitol to sign papers falsely claiming Trump had won the state's 10 electoral votes and sent them to the U.S. Senate.

-Hanson, of Elkhorn, is a member of the Walworth County Democratic Party.