

Rep. Steffen, Sen. Wimberger: Author bill in response to Green Bay mayor's wiretapping activity

Posted on Thursday, Mar 16, 2023

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Madison—Today, Representative David Steffen (R-Howard) and Senator Eric Wimberger (R-Green Bay) introduced legislation that would create clear requirements in order for government officials to collect audio recordings.

The bill comes in the wake of the recent discovery that audio recording devices had been installed in the Green Bay City Hall, unbeknownst to the public. While Green Bay's Mayor claimed to be operating within the scope of the law, his activities have sparked public backlash and concern regarding privacy rights in public spaces.

"People were rightly upset when they found out their conversations were being secretly recorded. The mayor's actions left community members feeling stripped of their privacy rights and wondering what personal conversations might have been collected," said Rep. Steffen.

The proposal would establish stringent requirements, should a local or state government wish to collect audio recordings in their public building. Specifically, two-thirds of the governing body would need to authorize collecting audio recordings and this authorization would need to be renewed each year. As a part of this process, information relating to the costs, procedures, locations, etc. of the audio recording system must be shared. Finally, signs must be posted wherever audio recordings are taking place and all recordings must be retained for 240 days.

"This legislation clarifies what types of oral communication have a high expectation of privacy, and creates the speech protections people thought they already had," said Sen. Wimberger.



For more information please contact Representative Steffen or Senator Wimberger. Their offices can be reached at Rep.Steffen@legis.wisconsin.gov or Sen.Wimberger@legis.wisconsin.gov.