STATE AFFAIRS
WISPOLITICS
Wisconsin's Premier Political News Service

Rep. Stubbs: Expresses disappointment with Board of Regents decision

Posted on Friday, Dec 15, 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.

After the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents reconvened, December 13, 2023 to further discuss a deal offered them by Republican legislators, a meeting which resulted in the Board overturning its previous decision rendered last Saturday, December 9, 2023, Representative Shelia Stubbs (D – Madison) released the following statement:

“I am beyond disbelief that the Board of Regents has forsaken its charge to protect and ensure the success of all students, staff, and faculty in the UW System. I am in complete disbelief, as are all of those who will be negatively impacted by this change of course by the Board. By overturning its own previous, correct verdict on this bad-faith deal, the Board of Regents has sent UW schools backward in history, in direct defiance of our state motto.

The proposal to trade diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and positions for pay raises and funding for the Engineering building creates the false illusion of choice; either we can have programming that supports and empowers our students, staff, and faculty of color, or we can have the money needed to sustain vital elements of our University system. I must remind you that since funds were already allocated in the budget for raises and for the Engineering building, any conditions placed on those funds were unacceptable.

As the representative of UW’s flagship university, UW-Madison, I feel uniquely betrayed by this decision. I am committed to defending the right of every BIPOC student, staff, and faculty member to a welcoming and equitable campus environment where racial and cultural differences are celebrated, not diminished.

To the students, staff, and faculty of color whose contributions and voices make our Wisconsin state universities great, I am deeply sorry for this decision. I am sorry that those who are entrusted with your best interests have elected to set those best interests aside. You are heard, you are valued, and you will continue to accomplish great things in spite of the barriers continually laid before you. I am committed to be your champion in the legislature and I will always have your well-being at the heart of my policy.

To the Regents who remained unshaken in their loyalty to the marginalized members of our University community, I thank you. I am grateful that you had the courage to do what was right. Your strength of character will be critical to defend against further attacks on the integrity of our state universities.

To those Regents whose votes changed and overturned the decision, I urge you to reflect on the gravity of your choice and on the people whose well-being you have decided to put in jeopardy. Wisconsin still has the worst racial disparities in the nation, and your decision has made it even harder to remedy them.

There is much work to do ahead of us. Though we are heartbroken by the Board of Regents' decision yesterday, we must not let this injustice deter us from constantly pursuing greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in our institutions of higher education and in every aspect of life. The prosperity and future of our universities and of the people of the State of Wisconsin depend on it.