

# Sen. Larson: Republicans ignore the will of the people, play politics with our constitution

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**Madison, WI** – If the actions of my Senate Republican colleagues in the first two full weeks of the 2023 legislative session were any indication of the severity of the problems facing our state, one might be forgiven for thinking we didn't have any.

High grocery prices are putting a squeeze on Wisconsin families. Local governments, particularly our public schools, are reaching a breaking point from lack of shared revenue. Wisconsin continues to be among the worst states for racial disparities, including income, wealth, segregation, infant and maternal mortality, and mass incarceration. We have a severe shortage of teachers, nurses, mental health professionals, corrections officers, prosecutors, public defenders, child care providers, and nursing home beds. Meanwhile, the state is sitting on a record \$6.9 billion surplus.

Did today's session address any of these issues? Absolutely not. Instead, Republicans, who took a 10-month vacation last year to campaign and who were the least active full-time legislature in the nation during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, are using their substantial power to punish poor people, abuse LGBTQ youth, worsen mass incarceration, and play political games they hope will help them achieve even more power in the April Supreme Court race.

One of the foundational principles of our state government is that the will of the people is the law of the land. Yet on issue after issue, legislative Republicans ignore the will of the people, and instead play culture wars to gin up resentment among their political base. Whether it's safe, legal abortion, cannabis legalization, BadgerCare expansion, high-speed rail, gun reform, clean water, or the most

popular of all, fully funding our public schools, Republicans remain far out of step with the people of our state.

Governor Evers understands what the people want, and advocates for what we desperately need. His top budget priority is fixing our broken shared revenue system. Republicans' top priority is giving massive tax breaks to the rich. That is, when they're not circumventing the Governor's veto by rushing constitutional amendments, abusing the rulemaking process, or refusing to consider his appointments.

If today's Senate calendar is anything to go by, Wisconsin is in for another divisive, ugly, and unproductive session, courtesy of a party who believe they've gerrymandered themselves out of all public accountability.