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Contact: Rep. Dan Knodl - (608) 237-9124

Will Democrats Stand with Wisconsin Ratepayers or Line the Pockets of Energy Executives?

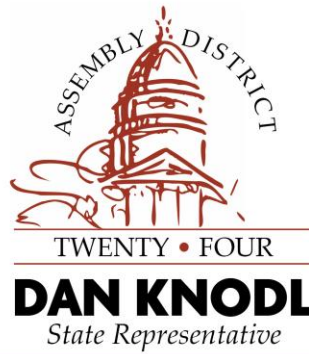
Madison, WI – As Wisconsin’s legislature considers SB28 and AB25, the controversial Right of First Refusal (ROFR) proposal, voters are asking where Democrats stand: with hardworking ratepayers or with the multi-millionaire executives at incumbent energy companies?

SB28 would grant monopoly utility companies the exclusive right to build new transmission projects—shutting out competition, driving up costs, and forcing Wisconsin families and businesses to pay higher electric bills. Studies have shown that ROFR laws lead to inflated project costs by allowing incumbent utilities to charge ratepayers more without facing competitive bids.

“Wisconsin residents deserve lower energy costs and a fair market—not backroom deals that guarantee profits for a handful of wealthy energy executives,” said Representative Dan Knodl (R-Germantown). “Why should working families and small businesses foot the bill for corporate greed?”

According to the most recent, publicly available Proxy Statements, the Board Chair and CEO of Alliant Energy earned \$9,709,782 in total compensation, the President and CEO of Wisconsin Energy Corporation (WEC) earned \$9,102,202, the Chairman and CEO of Madison Gas and Electric (MGE) earned \$2,566,797, and XCEL Energy’s Chairman and CEO earned \$21,357,168. Yes, that’s more than TWENTY-ONE MILLION dollars in one year. Of course, compensation figures can vary between sources, but the numbers suggest that Wisconsinites are providing a more than comfortable living for the executives of companies in favor of ROFR.

Despite widespread opposition from consumer advocates and free-market supporters, SB28 has gained traction with lawmakers aligned with the state’s largest utilities. The question remains: Will Wisconsin Democrats reject this blatant corporate handout, or will they side with ATC, Xcel, Alliant, and WEC over the interests of their constituents?



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With utility rates already rising, Wisconsin cannot afford policies that eliminate competition and allow monopoly utilities to pass unchecked costs onto the public. In a funny but poignant social media post, a constituent quipped, “Just got my electricity bill and I believe I got charged for the sunlight, the moonlight, the streetlight, the light of my life, the speed of light, and the light at the end of the tunnel.” Wisconsinites cannot afford ROFR. Voters deserve transparency—and they will be watching closely to see which lawmakers stand up for fair energy pricing and which ones cave to special interests.

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