

Senator Devin LeMahieu

Please give SB99 a vote on the Senate and Assembly floors, in a forum which can be witnessed by the citizens of Wisconsin.

We were informed that we do not have enough Senate votes (*in caucus*) to go to the floor. I can only assume this means we have not met the threshold for the "Rule of 17". The result is that our work for the last 7 years will be dismissed, yet again, by an anti-democratic, anonymous, unwritten mechanism used by Wisconsin Senators.

In school we are taught the importance of actively participating in the civic process. We are taught to vote and to inform our lawmakers of our opinions. We are taught that we can use this process to better our world. Many of us actually believe it. We know that we won't always get a "yes" but that if we DID get a "no", at least the process was fair and objective.

Wisconsin's spinal cord injury (SCI) community has worked tirelessly for 7 years in support of a sensible, humanitarian, fiscally responsible solution to the travesty of living with SCI (during which time we have passed productive bills in 3 other states where some of your SCI residents have traveled to receive therapies). Our time in Wisconsin has been eye-opening: we have learned much about the inner-workings of the Wisconsin legislature and its volatile partisanship. Two grievances rise to the top: The Rule of 17 and the indifference or lack of substantive response from GOP Senators.

The so-called "Rule of 17" is anti-democratic. It does not reflect the will of the people, but only serves to protect the majority party's grasp on power, by allowing a handful of lawmakers to hold the legislative process hostage. Senator LeMahieu - the power and responsibility to override the rule of 17 rests with YOU.

Many Senators' rigid ideology allows them to take the lazy route to legislating, by giving a blanket "no" to spending or "if we pass legislation for you, we'll have everyone knocking on our door". Both of which are weak arguments to stand behind. But even worse than a "no" is being ignored by these legislators, as they hope we will give up and move along. By allowing anonymous caucus "voting" before an actual vote, you allow and protect Senators from responding to their constituents and exposing their priorities.

Please do the right thing by WI citizens. Honor our sacrifices and efforts. Give us a vote. If the popularity of our program is in question, please know that we passed on the Assembly floor last year with a 93-3 vote. We have passed unanimously in both the Senate and Assembly Committees where we were assigned.

If the Senate floor vote is no, then the public should know how their Senator voted. If that is the case, we will accept that Wisconsin does not want the opportunity this bill provides and we will move on and be satisfied that the process was objective and fair. Our community cannot

continue to be strung along for years on end. Spinal cord injury does not give us the luxury of time.

I will end by asking you, respectfully, to give us a direct answer: will you or won't you give SB99 a Senate floor vote?

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.