



John Nygren

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Rep. Nygren Sues Governor Evers for Hiding Records

Madison—The Assembly Chair of the Joint Finance Committee Representative John Nygren (R-Marquette) filed a lawsuit in Dane County to force Governor Tony Evers and his office to end their practice of hiding public records.

“Governor Evers and his staff are blatantly hiding and denying access to public documents. Whether it’s the media, a concerned citizen, or an elected official, the public records law exists to provide access to what government is doing. Governor Evers is not above the law,” said Rep. Nygren. “These brazen attempts to hide public documents is shameful and begs to question what Governor Evers and his staff are hiding.”

In July, the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) requested the release of funds from the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) for counseling vouchers for farmers. In response, the Co-Chairs of JFC informed DATCP that it needed to work with the Speaker’s Task Force on Suicide Prevention and answer important questions raised by task force members about program operations and transparency. Instead, DATCP, at the direction of the Governor’s office, attacked JFC claiming insufficient funds existed at DATCP for farmer mental health.

Not only did DATCP continue to withhold information from the task force Chair Rep. Joan Ballweg, DATCP provided similar information to media outlets while Rep. Ballweg waited for a reply. Even more concerning is the fact that there was a discrepancy in available funds for counseling vouchers for farmers. OpenBook, which tracks government expenditures, reported a higher available balance than what DATCP claimed publicly.

Seeking the truth, Rep. Nygren requested records from DATCP and the Governor’s office related to farmer mental health over a one month period. DATCP fulfilled the request but the Governor’s office denied the request. The petition filed today by Rep. Nygren seeks to have the court require Governor Evers and his staff turn over public records related to the original records request.

“It is sad that Governor Evers and his staff refuse to be transparent and denied access to records about the very program they were seeking additional funding for,” said Rep. Nygren. “These are taxpayer dollars but more importantly, these are funds that were meant to help our farmers in a time of need. Once again it’s all about politics with the Governor and his staff when it should be about the people we serve in this state.”

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