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August 31, 2020

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Sen. Smith's Statement on Policing Reform Special Session

MADISON – Today, the Wisconsin Senate gaveled in for a special session on policing reform and immediately recessed, preventing any space for debate or action on the legislative proposals. No Republicans were present during today's special session.

Last week, Governor Tony Evers (D) called for a special session for the State Legislature to take up legislation aimed at reforming police practices and improving police accountability. This [legislative package](#), including nine bills, was first introduced in June by Governor Evers and Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes (D). Governor Evers pressed the Republican-controlled Legislature to act on this legislative package in response to the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man shot seven times in the back by a police officer in Kenosha on August 23rd.

In response to Governor Evers' call for a special session, Majority Party Leaders indicated [no bills would be taken up](#) and expressed support for a Task Force on Racial Disparities in the future to contemplate racial equity measures, despite public outcry from Wisconsin residents and public figures in the state urging immediate action.

Senator Jeff Smith (D – Brunswick) shared the following statement regarding the outcome of today's special session:

“The outcome of today's special session was disappointing, but not surprising. Like the many times before, I was here ready to participate in a special session that Republicans decided was never going to happen. The People of Wisconsin should be outraged at the lack of responsibility these so-called leaders have in representing our state.

“Republicans have absolutely no intention of offering solutions; if they did they would have acted a long time ago. But today, all we have from them is their sad excuse for action coming in the form of a task force going nowhere.

“Wisconsin can be a stronger, more inclusive state for all, but it will take all of our effort. I'll continue standing alongside my Democratic colleagues advocating for measures to create more equitable communities throughout Wisconsin.”

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The 31st Senate District includes all of Buffalo and Pepin counties and portions of Trempealeau, Pierce, Dunn, Eau Claire and Jackson counties and very small portions of Chippewa and St. Croix counties.