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Rep. Bowen Statement on Passage of Speaker's Task Force Bills

"When I Think about This Moment... We Missed It"

MADISON - In reaction to the passage earlier today of all of the policing bills originating from the Speaker's Task Force on Racial Disparities, State Rep. David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

"I wish I could stand here and say that I am overjoyed at the passage earlier today of all of the police reform legislation from the Speaker's Task Force on Racial Disparities, but that would not be the truth. The reality is that these bills do not meet the urgency of the moment. For over a year, people across our nation have been marching and demanding change, and here today, after months of delaying tactics, we were presented with these watered-down 'reforms.' Today, when I think about this moment in history and what it demands from us; well, we missed it."

Earlier today, the Assembly voted on and passed a number of bills related to police reform, seven of which came directly out of the Speaker's Task Force on Racial Disparities, and several others were amended during the committee process to better align with the recommendations of the Speaker's Task Force. During the course of the day, Rep. Bowen offered four amendments on Task Force bills (in addition to three he previously offered in committee) in order to improve them; all of those amendments were voted down.

"Despite the decision by my Republican colleagues to vote down all of my reasonable, common-sense, compromise amendments that would've made the Task Force bills better from a policy angle and more in line with the needs and desires of the community, I still chose to vote in favor of all but the worst of these bills. This was not an easy choice, as not a single one of these bills will consistently save Black lives. But I am willing to take a single baby step forward with these bills while doing everything I can to make real change happen with other proposals that align with community demands and actually create significant change in our neighborhoods.

My Republican colleagues told us today that these bills are a start, and that we need to keep having these conversations around policing and racial disparities. Good, I'm glad that they recognize that fact! Now, it's up to them to make sure that the numerous other police reform proposals that are before the body, including my Enough is Enough package, get fair hearings and an opportunity to make it to the floor of the Assembly.

If this is only a 'start,' I hope we can actually continue to move the ball forward in the Legislature this Session."
