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ALDERMAN, 14TH DISTRICT

Legislature's wage proposal tramples on working families, local control

Statement of Alderman Tony Zielinski February 12, 2014

This morning, I joined elected officials and working people from throughout Wisconsin to voice my opposition to proposed state legislation that would undermine local municipalities' ability to set local minimum and living wage laws.

These wage laws have been on the books for years in municipalities like Milwaukee, Madison and Dane County. They have been a tremendous benefit to hardworking families who are just trying to make a better life for themselves and their children, and anyone who would roll them back is clearly choosing the interests of big business over the needs of the working poor.

It baffles me how these proposals to preempt the power of local government continue to emerge from the Republican Party of the State of Wisconsin. This is the party that purports itself to be the champion of local control. And yet, lately, its members always seem to be trampling on that concept when it suits their corporate backers.

Perhaps these state legislators who take issue with the way local governments are being run should resign their seats in Madison and run for county board.

What's more, the manner in which these proposals are rushed through the legislative process should set off alarm bells for residents statewide. We only learned of this wage proposal yesterday, and now it's already getting a public hearing? Why are the sponsors in such a hurry to get it passed? Are they worried what will happen if the details of their plans become widely-known among the public?

It's my hope that cooler heads will prevail, that the democratic process will not be rushed once again in Madison and that this proposal will be dismissed as a legislative overreach and bad public policy. This is simply no way to govern.

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