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LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD BASED ON THE THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

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Tod O. Ohnstad

Wisconsin

Assemblymember, HD-065 (D)

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Lifetime
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Score

2024 WI Legislative Scorecard

Based on the Principles of the U.S. Constitution

★ Constitutional ✗ Unconstitutional ? Did not Vote Vote

- 1. AB553 Free Speech, Academic Freedom, and Due Process** (passed 62 to 36 on 11/7/2023). Establishes free speech, academic freedom, and due process standards at University of Wisconsin System institutions and technical colleges. **NO** ✗
- 2. SB466 Second Amendment Financial Privacy** (passed 62 to 35 on 1/18/2024). Forbids a financial institution from requiring the use of a merchant category code that identifies the merchant as a firearms retailer and provides that no governmental entity may maintain a list of firearms owners. **NO** ✗
- 3. AB975 Legalizing Abortion Up to 14 Weeks** (passed 53 to 46 on 1/25/2024). Would have placed on the April 2024 ballot a referendum on legalizing abortion up to the 14th week of pregnancy, except in the case of a "medical emergency." **NO** ★
- 4. AB291 Eliminating the Waiting Period After Divorce** (passed 93 to 6 on 1/25/2024). Eliminates the six-month waiting period for remarriage after a divorce. **YES** ✗
- 5. AB470 Public Utility Monopolies** (passed 85 to 12 on 2/15/2024). Adopts a "right of first refusal" for incumbent public utilities to build transmission projects. **YES** ✗
- 6. AB29 Restoring Sound Money** (passed 86 to 12 on 2/20/2024). Creates a sales and use tax exemption for gold, silver, and other precious metals. **NO** ✗

Scorecard Votes: 17%

Why do these votes matter?

1. Free Speech, Academic Freedom, and Due Process

AB553 establishes free speech, academic freedom, and due process standards at University of Wisconsin System institutions and technical colleges.

This bill prohibits taxpayer-funded colleges and universities from restricting free speech, academic freedom, and due process rights. Freedom of speech and due process of law are among the “certain unalienable Rights” that every person is entitled to against government at any level, and what no public institution should deny. Both the U.S. Constitution and the Wisconsin Constitution exist to secure these rights. For example, the First Amendment was written to protect “freedom of speech,” but, in conjunction with the Ninth and 10th Amendments, reserves jurisdiction over the matter to the states or to the people. The Wisconsin Constitution’s Declaration of Rights then clarifies that “no laws shall be passed to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech” and the “right of the people peaceably to assemble ... shall never be abridged.”

2. Second Amendment Financial Privacy

SB466 forbids financial institutions from using an identifying code for purchases from firearm retailers and provides that no governmental entity may maintain a list of firearms owners.

This bill prevents the unlawful use of credit card payment information to track firearms purchases. A new merchant category code for “gun and ammunition shops” introduced by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)—a globalist collaborative linked to the United Nations—aids unconstitutional efforts by the federal government to conduct mass surveillance, create a national gun-owner database, and confiscate firearms from law-abiding citizens. States should nullify any such actions taken by private or public entities, that frustrate, if not blatantly violate, Americans’ Second and Fourth Amendment rights.

3. Legalizing Abortion Up to 14 Weeks

AB975 would have placed on the April 2024 ballot a referendum on legalizing abortion up to the 14th week of pregnancy.

The care of human life—not its destruction—is the greatest responsibility of government. Wisconsin ought to enforce its 1849 abortion ban and secure the right to life for every pre-born child. The right to life is the most fundamental, God-given, and “unalienable” right, and is protected by the Fifth and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Moreover, state laws should not be subject to popular votes. Referendums are insufficient safeguards from what the American Founders described as the “dangers of democracy.” Article IV, Section 4, of the U.S. Constitution guarantees to “every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government,” which implies government limited to the ‘rule of law,’ as opposed to mere unchecked ‘majority rule.’

4. Eliminating the Waiting Period After Divorce

AB291 eliminates the six-month waiting period for remarriage after a divorce.

This bill is a consequence of “no-fault divorce,” which is unjust and unconstitutional. It permits persons to injure their spouses and children (e.g., adultery or abandonment) with impunity—thereby aiding and abetting violators of the marital covenant while denying victims due process of law. It also mistakenly assumes that valid grounds for divorce are to be determined solely, even frivolously, by the government. On the contrary, marriage is ordained by God, not the state. The most sacred of all human institutions, marriage serves as the foundation of the family. God-honoring marriages are essential to securing liberty and self-government for our children, whereas the fallout from “no-fault divorce” has been devastating. Wisconsin should protect families rather than tear them apart.

5. Public Utility Monopolies

AB470 adopts a “right of first refusal” for incumbent public utilities to build transmission projects.

This bill ends competitive bidding of new and large-scale multi-billion-dollar transmission projects in Wisconsin, granting exclusive control over the state’s electric grid to existing public utilities, further expanding their monopolies. Removing the benefits of competition and restricting access to utility providers will result in higher electricity rates and less reliable service, harming both families and businesses. Rather than contribute to Wisconsin’s energy inflation and threatening its industries through corrupt, corporate-sponsored protectionism, the Legislature should encourage free-market enterprise.

6. Restoring Sound Money

AB29 creates a sales and use tax exemption for gold, silver, and other precious metals.

This bill is a necessary step toward restoring sound money and adhering to the U.S. Constitution’s monetary provisions. According to Article 1, Section 10, of the Constitution, “No State shall ... make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts.” States can and must act now to protect Americans’ financial freedom and privacy by both ending the Federal Reserve’s unconstitutional monopoly on money and thwarting government plans to impose a Central Bank Digital Currency.