

March 15, 2004

Senator Ronald Brown
Room 104 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

MAR 17 2004

Dear Senator Brown:

I am writing in regard to 2003 Senate Bill 356 which is presently in your Committee on Homeland Security, Veterans and Military Affairs and Government Reform. This bill, introduced by Senator Dave Hansen, is designed to prohibit governmental bodies from excluding its own members' attendance at any and all meetings of that body.

At first reading of Section 19.89 of the Wisconsin Statutes, one might wonder what governmental body would even think of excluding elected officials from attendance at its own meetings. Shockingly, the Peshtigo School District Board of Education has such a policy, and enforces it.

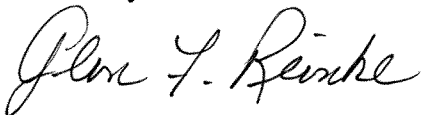
There have been numerous attempts to change the existing Board policy to no avail. Opinions have been sought locally and through the office of the State Attorney General as to the validity and legality of the Board's policy. Unfortunately, since the current State Statute allows government bodies to exclude its members, there is no compelling reason for the controlling majority of the Peshtigo School Board to change its preposterous position.

Since all local attempts to change the board policy in Peshtigo have been unsuccessful, it appears that only a change in the wording of Section 19.89 of the State Statutes will prevent other governmental bodies from developing and instituting such reprehensible policies.

This country was founded on the principles of representative government. Your diligent support of SB-356 will help correct a major flaw in the statutes of our great state of Wisconsin.

Thanking you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,



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cc: Senator Dave Hansen