

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE

July 8, 2021

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing **Assembly Bill 407** in its entirety.

This bill creates a Legislative Human Resources Office as a nonpartisan legislative service agency, with positions in the unclassified service of the state civil service system and headed by a director. Additionally, the bill seeks to shield the office's records from the public records law by requiring the office to "at all times observe the confidential nature of records, requests, advice, complaints, reviews, investigations, disciplinary actions and other information in its possession relating to human resources matters."

I am vetoing this bill because I object to creating a blanket exemption for the legislature's personnel records. The public can often only learn about misconduct through public records requests, including requests for personnel records. The people of Wisconsin have a right to know about misconduct by public officials and employees, including those in the legislature. Further, this provision is unnecessary. Current law already gives record custodians ample flexibility to protect sensitive information contained in personnel records, such as the names or other information that could be relied on to infer the identity of a victim or whistleblower.

While I would support a clean bill that establishes a Legislative Office of Human Resources, I cannot support a bill that would be used to hide official misconduct from public scrutiny. The people of Wisconsin deserve more transparency, not less.

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor