

Why is this?  
By Glenn Grothman

The State Legislature is finishing its business for its two-year cycle. Many bills are being voted on. The vast majority of bills are passed by a voice vote or almost unanimously. A few bills are subject to closer votes and in these bills one can see which issues define the Republican or Democratic parties.

On Thursday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, there were more than 75 issues on the calendar. Bills scheduled that day-included provisions assisting veterans, reforming condominium law, dealing with labor relations of public employees and municipalities and the siting of agricultural business. Another issue was a constitutional amendment to ban same sex marriage. This was a good constitutional amendment. I have written in the past that homosexuality is not as genetic as some people have said. For society to approve of same sex marriage would be to say to our young people that this is no big deal and would result in more of them opting for the homosexual lifestyle.

The newspapers reported it passed 68-27. But what I found interesting was the degree to which the Democratic Party fought this proposal.

On most issues before the legislature, we know which side will win before the debate. Nevertheless, the losing side will spend some time making its case to the press corps or the public by talking at length. Sometimes they filibuster to “punish” the winning side by making them stay late.

A bill expanding school choice could cause the opposition, primarily Democrats, to talk an hour. The state budget, a forty billion dollar document, will cause about three hours of debate. A debate simplifying the permitting process for a natural resources permit could last two hours. To my amazement, the constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage caused Democratic legislators to talk for about 18 hours. At least 20 of the 40 Democrats took part in the filibuster. Democrats who virtually never talk on the floor gave 20-minute speeches. We finally finished the debate at 9:15 the next morning. Twenty-seven of the forty Democrats (and two Republicans) voted against the amendment. Another eight Democrats voted for civil unions – virtually the same thing. The other bills scheduled that day had to be rescheduled for the next week.

One Democrat, Rep. Gary Sherman of Bayfield County, got so carried away he used a four letter word beginning with “f” on the floor of the State Assembly. This is the first time I’ve ever heard this word used on the floor of the Legislature. While the State Senate did not go all night, it also spent an inordinately long time, six to seven hours, debating the bill. (In the Assembly, the Republicans decided not to talk more than 15 minutes, fearful that by speaking we would only egg the Democrats on more.)

I sided with the Democrats on several issues and pride myself on not voting a strict party line. But, one must ask oneself what has happened when 35 of 40 Democrats are for civil unions (and 14 of 15 Democrats in the Senate). The idea of homosexual marriage is something that would have occurred to virtually no one in the history of the western world until ten years ago.

Now this issue evokes more passion and time from the Democrats than environmentalism, more funding for schools, or labor union issues. Why is this? I do not know. Probably one to three percent of the population is homosexual but many of these people do not want to marry. But why do elected Democrat legislators in Wisconsin collectively care more about this than anything else – even the state budget?

Please let me know what you think on this issue. Contact me here in Madison---please call 1-888-534-0058, or in any of the following ways:

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