



Wisconsin Grand**Sons of Liberty**

"We the people are the rightful masters of both Congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution." – Abraham Lincoln

For Immediate Release! ~~~~~ **PRESS RELEASE** ~~~~~ *For Immediate Release!*

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(Franklin, WI) Jan 25 – Wisconsin GrandSons of Liberty supports LRB-1662 and the legislators who are authoring and sponsoring this bipartisan reform Wisconsin’s Civil AssetForfeiture laws. This simple proposal protects innocent Wisconsinites from losing their property to the government if first they are not convicted of a crime. Ultimately, the legislators supporting this proposal are protecting the Constitutional Rights of the innocent. Who is against protecting the Constitutional Rights of every Wisconsinite and Americans visiting our great state?

We agree that Criminal asset forfeiture serves a useful purpose. It denies criminals the benefits of their illicit activity, deters further criminal activity through the takings of their ability to support, fund, or operate their criminal activity. The Criminal Forfeiture provisions of Wisconsin law offer police the needed latitude for proper investigative work to seize assets of criminals but provides little incentive to return property once seized. LRB-1662 does nothing to stop law enforcement from doing their job to investigate criminal activity and seize property tangibly connected to criminal activity.

In nationwide CATO Institute poll, 84% of respondents want civil forfeiture laws reformed so that personal property, cash, cars, and homes are not taken by the government unless the owner is convicted of criminal activity. We happen to agree. Now is the time to protect Constitutional Rights.

The Fourth Amendment which states that we are secure in our “persons, houses, papers, and effects” gets challenged every day in America. Police officers can help themselves to the cash, cars, boats, or houses of Americans and never charge them with a crime. Sadly, people do have their houses, papers, and other stuff taken without personally being charged with a crime. Ironically, you are not entitled to get your seized stuff back because of our twisted Civil Asset Forfeiture laws.

The currently, Civil Asset Forfeiture laws get applied in surreal ways. Police set aside our constitutional protections to seize our property simply by claiming they have a hunch that your property might be related to some sort of criminal activity. No proof required. No tangible evidence required. Just a hunch by the police officer and no criminal charges are required to take your stuff. Once they take your property, it is up to you to prove its innocence.

While the current law does give the innocent property owner recourse to defend their wrongly seized property, the system is stacked against the owner successfully defending the property. Also, current law does not require automatic property return if the person is never charged, gets acquitted or is found innocent if charged. The owner with Constitutional Rights gets separated from the property which has no Constitutional Rights. Property is treated as if it is guilty of criminal activity and gets its own trial in which the owner can either pay to defend it or cut their losses and let the government keep it. The bottom line is, once the police take your stuff; getting your property back is an uphill struggle.

The provisions in LRB-1662 do nothing to hamper law enforcement’s ability to properly conduct investigations or apprehend criminals. LRB-1662 does what 84% of the people want, it protects their Constitutional Rights.

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