

MADISON - It happened Tuesday, January 12th on the first day of the 2016 legislative session.

Senate Minority Leader **Peter Barca** (D-Kenosha) rose to argue with Rep. **Bob Gannon** (R-Slinger) over a news release Gannon issued last week complaining about Milwaukee's homicide rate and how more homicides occur in black neighborhoods with high unemployment rates.

Gannon, a Slinger Republican, made an obscene gesture toward Barca, giving him "the finger". The minority leader looked shocked and demanded Republican leaders reprimand him.

The exchange went as follows:

Gannon: "If Milwaukee wants to export something, how about you export safety and jobs? Thank you Mr. Speaker."



Barca: "It's bad enough, Mr. Speaker, that this release comes out. If the gentleman's misunderstood, he can certainly stand up and apologize, and say 'look, I'm misunderstood. I didn't mean…' Did you just give me the finger? Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a motion to reprimand him! He just stood up — I'm sure WisconsinEye will plainly show him giving me the finger. What is wrong with you?"



Today, Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Martha Laning released the following statement regarding the racially insensitive remarks defended by Rep. Bob Gannon and the obscene gesture made by Gannon on the first Assembly session day of 2016:

"Representative Gannon should be ashamed to call himself a State Representative in light of his actions yesterday. It is a sad day when doing the people's work in our state capitol is interrupted by a legislator breaking the most basic rules of civility and decent behavior.

"Rep. Gannon has apologized since yesterday's incident, but his refusal to apologize for his remarks about the city of Milwaukee and its residents remains unacceptable.

"Rep. Gannon should apologize not only for his reprehensible actions on the Assembly floor, but for showing an outright dissrespect to the people of Milwaukee, the people of Wisconsin, and the people's house he is supposed to represent."