

Scott Walker Just Didn't Pass Probation

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GREEN BAY - Have you ever hired someone? It's a lot of fun. You get to make that call, tell them they got the job. Ask if they can start next Monday. They are all happy and thankful. To me, it was the best part of being a manager.



Unfortunately, that's not always the end of the employee selection process. Sometimes, a lot of the claims the new employee made in the interview just don't pan out. Sometimes they lied, and job applicants almost always exaggerate. After a few weeks watching them on the job, you realize that you have made a mistake.

That's why the State of Wisconsin, as an employer, puts all new hires on a six month probationary period that each must pass before they are granted permanent status as an employee. Most employers, public and private, have similar policies. It's a pretty standard practice in the world of human resources.

We do not have a comparable practice for the political leaders we elect. We seem to forget that people running for mayor, senator, or Governor are just job applicants. We are the electors, and the job is to represent all of us as the managers of our government.

If we had a six month probationary period for Governor of Wisconsin, like other jobs, I would maintain that Scott Walker just did not pass it. Unlike the world of TV, however, we just don't have a Donald Trump that can say "you're fired". Our process for this job is to wait a year after hire, gather nearly a million signatures to call a recall election, and then give the applicant a second chance to tell us why they should have the job.

The good part is that we now have Scott Walker's record on the job to consider as we remake our employee selection decision. Did Scott Walker represent all of us, or at least most of us, and

effectively manage our government? I think that the answer is most certainly “No”!

Almost immediately after his hire, Scott Walker chose to promote his own visibility on the National Republican stage by implementing a whole score of divisive partisan policies that have torn Wisconsin apart. Rather than do the job he was elected to do, he has spent his time traveling around the country gathering funds for his own re-election and promoting his career as a “rock star” on Fox TV.

While he has been promoting himself in his “national reality show”, Wisconsin's economy has been the most stagnant in the nation. He has not paid nearly a billion dollars in previously promised support to our schools. He has “managed” his employees by blaming them for the state's problems and ignored the contractual promises made to them by his predecessors.

If you were his supervisor, what argument could you honestly make for keeping him on? Has he done his job? Has he told us how he would do better?

(Bob Kiefert is the former Assistant Director of Human Resources for Milwaukee County and served in that capacity from 2002-2005 when Scott Walker was Milwaukee County Executive.)

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