



# Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

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March 31, 2022

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE:

I am vetoing Senate Bill 296 in its entirety.

This bill would create a definition of “riot” and creates penalties for certain actions under this new definition.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because the conduct this bill purportedly intends to prevent is already generally prohibited under current law. For instance, intentionally failing or refusing to withdraw from an unlawful assembly in which the person knows has been ordered to disperse is already a crime, as are various forms of battery, damaging property, arson, disorderly conduct, theft, and trespass.

Moreover, this bill inadvertently creates ambiguity, inconsistency, and contradictions in practical application that could be used to infringe on rights guaranteed under the First Amendment. There is a difference between a peaceful assembly and an unlawful one that threatens public safety, damages property, and destroys livelihoods. Current law already ensures individuals who engage in the latter can be held accountable.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Evers'.

Tony Evers  
Governor