

Legislative Update 12/24

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With election campaigning going on for the last several months, there has not been a lot happening in the capitol, which some might consider a good thing.

A friend from North Dakota told me several years ago that their legislature is limited by law to only meeting for 60 days – every two years. It makes you wonder why, if they can do it, our legislators (and those of many other states) need so much more time.

This is not intended to disparage our legislators; in fact, as a WBH member, I have found them to be resolute and hard-working. But sometimes I think, like many things, they find ways to fill the time, (and budget), allowed to them.

Election results have changed the complexion of both houses. Prior to the most recent election, both the Assembly and Senate were heavily weighted in favor of the Republicans. However, the Democrat-majority state Supreme Court ruled that the legislative districts were laid out to favor Republicans, usually referred to as a practice known as gerrymandering. So, our Democrat governor drew up new district maps, that many consider gerrymandered to favor his party. The result has been Republicans still maintain a majority in both houses, but they did lose several seats, which created a closer balance between the two parties.

While historically Republicans have been much stronger supporters of hunting and 2nd Amendment issues, a more closely balanced legislature is not necessarily a terrible thing. Both parties have worthwhile ideas, and when the balance is closer, there is a better chance that all sides of an argument will be considered.

The legislature is the least of the problems hunters are facing these days. Hunters' problems rest more with the lack of leadership in the DNR. A strong and influential ANTI-hunting presence in Madison, a Natural Resources Board controlled by the current governor's appointees, some of which have little regard for hunting, and a decimated deer herd in much of the North, are all issues that we as hunters are up against.

It will be an interesting year to say the least. Stay tuned.
