

Senator Chris Larson Reacts to COVID-19 Legislation

Written by Chris Larson, State Senator, District 7

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Proposal brought forward by legislative Republicans is insufficient to respond to an unprecedented public health crisis, says Larson. This small band-aid is not going to fix the gaping wound.

Milwaukee, WI – Today, Senator Chris Larson offered this reaction to the lackluster legislation brought forward by Republican legislative leaders and passed in an embarrassingly biased virtual session.



“As we face the toughest health and economic crisis in a generation, our state senate finally convened to do quite possibly the least they could, as late as possible. Republicans have had weeks to prepare and confront the COVID-19 crisis that continues to devastate our neighbors' health, jobs, and daily lives. Today's virtual session and legislation showed their failure to meet this moment in history. Instead of fostering public discourse and bipartisan debate, Republican's stifled the discussion by using the pandemic as an excuse to shut down debate and instead rush through the weakest piece of legislation they could muster. They denied senators' clear requests to discuss and improve on the lackluster GOP proposal.

“The proposal brought forward by legislative Republicans is an insufficient attempt to respond to this unprecedented public health crisis, it is deeply disturbing that they rejected all efforts at bipartisan compromise.

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“The Republican bill does not provide support for families needing child care. It rejected providing hazard pay to our frontline healthcare and service workers. It failed to support local governments in their efforts to combat COVID-19. It also fell short of offering help to those who need medical care due to COVID-19. Most importantly, it doesn't address the inherent problem of our broken health care system. Even if we had widespread testing (which we don't due to the failure of President Trump), too many avoid going to the doctor because they can't afford the co-pays, deductibles, or cost of care for other ailments, let alone COVID-19. This was not addressed at the state level and has not been addressed at the national level.

“Especially concerning was the lack of concern by GOP leaders over the safety and integrity of our elections. Far too many of our neighbors were disenfranchised this past election. Senate Amendment 1 was intended to ease the burden on the public by providing for electoral integrity and fair access to the ballot by allowing our neighbors across the state to safely vote from home this fall by sending them each a ballot through the mail. Unfortunately, Republican legislators again ignore the health, safety, and dignity of our Wisconsin neighbors by rejecting these reforms for the next election.

“It is clear that Republican leadership is not willing to take bold action to protect our neighbors. Governor Evers, my fellow Democratic Legislators, and I have fought for weeks for a unified, bipartisan response to the COVID-19 crisis. This small band-aid is not going to fix the gaping wound of health and economic distress our neighbors are facing.

“Wisconsin deserves bold action to meet the moment, not political games and weak tea.”