

Association for Justice: Legal immunity is not a solution to the COVID-19 pandemic

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(Madison) The Wisconsin Association for Justice (WAJ) calls on legislators to immediately work with the Governor to create a comprehensive pandemic response plan that puts the health and safety of Wisconsin residents first and gets our economy going. Safe jobs means paychecks for healthy people.

“With the election now over, it is time for policymakers to come together and craft a plan that gets the virus under control,” said WAJ President Beverly Wickstrom, “Removing legal protections is not a solution to the problem we face as a state.” Over the summer, legislators circulated a bill, [LRB-6434](#), that takes the opposite approach. Instead of creating a plan to suppress the virus, the bill would confer sweeping and unnecessary legal protections for businesses and individuals who negligently expose Wisconsinites to COVID-19.

“Legislators should reject any proposal providing blanket legal immunity to businesses and individuals who fail to follow safety protocols and negligently expose their workers, customers, or visitors to COVID-19,” said Beverly Wickstrom, “WAJ urges Governor Evers to veto any blanket immunity bill that reaches his desk. Our front line first responders and workers deserve no less.”

Immunity undermines the goal of controlling the virus. The public policy priority must be improving individuals’ safety and getting the virus under control.

Eliminating legal accountability undermines public health by removing incentives for businesses and individuals to take the steps necessary to keep people safe.

There is no wave of COVID litigation. As has been [reported](#) by [outlets](#) nationwide, a database created and maintained by the corporate defense law firm Hunton Andrews Kurth reveals that there is no wave of litigation connected to COVID-19 exposure nationally or in the state of Wisconsin.

The Governor and the Legislature have the duty to craft our state's comprehensive response. The civil justice system exists to make sure people's rights are protected at the local level.

"The legislature should not be invading the right of citizens to decide whether people are taking the necessary care to keep people safe in their communities," said Wickstrom, "There is no way the legislature can see from Madison whether people in every corner of the state are doing their best to keep people safe. Businesses that are taking adequate steps to ensure safety and reduce risk have nothing to fear. Legal immunity does nothing but give a green light to bad actors. Act now to get our economy going and keep us safe!"