

Evers calls on Legislature to address homelessness, drinking water contamination, other issues

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Gov. Tony Evers assigned the GOP-controlled Legislature “homework” for the upcoming year, calling on lawmakers to address a range of topics including homelessness, contaminated drinking water and the so-called “dark store” loophole.

Evers, a former teacher and state superintendent, in a letter to lawmakers Thursday identified a number of already-introduced bills he wants to see passed by the end of the session.

But Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald slammed the missive as “condescending” and said it “won’t help him grow support for an agenda with Senate Republicans.”

“The tone of this letter is ridiculous,” tweeted the Juneau Republican.

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Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, meanwhile, tweeted “#condescending is a polite term for what it is” in response to a tweet from Sen. David Craig, R-Big Bend, about the letter.

Evers opened the letter by referencing a similar communication Assembly Republicans sent him last January outlining 11 legislative goals. The gov highlighted five — income tax reductions, enhancing high-speed internet, support for K-12 education, addressing the debt level in the transportation fund and infrastructure investments — in which “we were able to make significant progress.”

He then highlighted the already-introduced bills for the upcoming year. Those include measures to cap the price of insulin, close the so-called “dark store” loophole, create PFAS standards to address contamination of drinking water, prevent a future backlog of sexual assault kits, address homelessness and alleviate the burden on local governments caused by “unexpected” special elections.

Evers also called for lawmakers to introduce bills to address sexual assault and harassment in the Wisconsin National Guard and surprise medical billing, update the state’s election laws to comply with federal law and help the agriculture industry, among other things.

And he warned the Legislature against adjourning “without making meaningful progress on the issues Wisconsinites care about.”

“Given the many opportunities we have to work together on the pressing issues facing our state, I am hopeful that the legislature (sic) will remain in session as long as is necessary to accomplish these important goals,” he said.

See the letter:

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/WIGOV/2020/01/-09/file_attachments/1355569/Evers_Leg%20Homework.pdf

See Fitzgerald’s tweet:

<https://twitter.com/SenFitzgerald/status/1215332342031478785>

See Vos’ tweet:

<https://twitter.com/repvos/status/1215379775780343808>