

Evers on 'UpFront' says COVID-19 'out of control' in Wisconsin

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Democratic Gov. Tony Evers said it would be "catastrophic" if a judge were to strike down his COVID-19 mask mandate, but he thinks the order will withstand a legal challenge.

"We believe we're in a good position here," Evers said in an interview aired Sunday on "UpFront," produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

The conservative Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty has filed suit over the mandate, and a St. Croix County judge is hearing the case.

"Most of the people in the state of Wisconsin do support face coverings, and they know that it's an important part of keeping safe and keeping their neighbors safe. So we do believe it will stay in place," Evers said.

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If it is struck down, Evers said "we'll find another way. We'll try local people to take it up."

Evers said his greatest concern with coronavirus right now is adequate hospital space, especially in the Fox Valley. The coronavirus field hospital set up months ago at State Fair Park in West Allis is due to start receiving its first patients within days.

"The virus is frankly right now out of control. We're setting records on a regular basis," Evers said.

Evers also said his administration is talking with Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett's office about the city continuing with its own coronavirus control plan, and not following the gov's new directive that most public gathering places limit themselves

to 25 percent occupancy.

“Their claim is their system is better for the city of Milwaukee,” Evers said. “I am concerned. The number of people that are in small areas is an issue. And Milwaukee isn’t immune to that. But we’re in discussions with the mayor’s office on that.”

The governor said he believed his administration would reach an “accommodation” with Milwaukee.

“UpFront” reporter Matt Smith also asked Evers about GOP Assembly Speaker Robin Vos’ recent request for a meeting.

“Is that going to happen?” Smith asked.

“Well I don’t know if it’s going to happen in what time frame, but sure, we’ll meet at some time. But the bottom line is, we know what I support. I support people staying safer at home, I support face coverings, and I support limits on gatherings. And we know that he does not support those things. So I would sure like to know going in what he is supportive of,” Evers said.

Smith also asked Evers about the recent Marquette University Law School Poll that showed Evers’ approval rating has dropped. Evers attributed it to pandemic fatigue.

“People get tired of the pandemic. There’s no surprise there,” the governor said. “It’s frustrating and tiring for people, but we have to pull together as a state.”

Smith also asked Evers if he plans to run for re-election in 2022.

“Too early to talk about that. I am spending my time and efforts making sure that Joe Biden becomes president, and we have a successful group of people getting in the Legislature. So it’s way too early to talk about that,” Evers said.

Also on the program, Seema Verma, a member of the White House Task Force on Coronavirus, said the federal government was ready to help Wisconsin in its current COVID-19 surge.

See more from the program: <http://www.wisn.com/upfront>