

GOP leaders discuss regional approach to reopening in meeting with Evers

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Assembly Speaker Robin Vos said a meeting with Gov. Tony Evers was a “good initial discussion” and expressed hope the state could take a regional approach to reopening businesses.

But Senate Minority Leader Janet Bewley, D-Mason, told WisPolitics.com GOP leaders offered nothing of substance in yesterday’s meeting and a regional approach would only divide Wisconsinites.

Evers met with legislative leaders yesterday afternoon on the eve of the state Supreme Court oral arguments in a lawsuit filed by GOP lawmakers. It seeks to prevent enforcement of the administration’s second stay-at-home order.

Ahead of the meeting, Evers said it wasn’t about trying to get ahead of a possible court decision nixing the order, but about finding out whether Republicans had a plan to reopen the economy. The gov has proposed a three-phase plan, but it doesn’t include a regional approach.

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Vos, R-Rochester, said in a statement after the meeting that other states have implemented regional plans, calling them a “safe and reasonable approach” he hoped to continue exploring.

“What’s needed for Wisconsin right now is a bipartisan reopening strategy that is safe, gradual and regional,” Vos said. “We shouldn’t have a Republican plan or a governor’s plan, we need a Wisconsin plan that the entire state can get behind.”

Bewley told WisPolitics.com Republicans didn't offer their own plan during the meeting, instead focusing on whether the gov would be willing to work on the regional approach. She said Evers indicated he'd consider it, but a regional approach would necessitate creating boundaries. She said that would result in businesses on one side of a regional line being able to do things that those on the other side might not.

"The last thing we need right now is any reason to divide us," Bewley said.