

Legislative Republicans: Letter to DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm about COVID-19 response

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Secretary-designee Andrea Palm
Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Secretary-designee Palm,

The effects of COVID-19 and Wisconsin's response to it have undoubtedly caused great anxiety across our state. As legislative representatives of the people of Wisconsin, we write you with great concern over a double standard imposed within DHS Emergency Order #12 (Shelter-in-Place) that contradicts reason and threatens the safety and wellbeing of Wisconsinites.

In the emergency order, you acknowledge that our state may not have the resources to combat COVID-19 in our communities, and that everyone in Wisconsin must "take all possible actions to reduce further spread of COVID-19 to save lives." However, abortion clinics are continuing to operate in Wisconsin, needlessly exposing people to the potential to contract COVID-19 and using precious medical resources that are needed elsewhere to save Wisconsinites. It is deeply disturbing to find out that many lower risk businesses have been shuttered while you have given Wisconsin's abortion clinics special dispensation to remain in operation. Several other states, including Maryland, Iowa, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Alabama, Mississippi, Ohio, Indiana, and West Virginia have ordered standalone abortion facilities within their borders to close down as part of the prudent directive

that all medical centers stop performing elective, non-essential surgeries and procedures to limit risk and reserve medical resources for COVID-19 response.

Doing everything reasonable and possible to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities must include fair implementation of orders to stop non-essential activities. The abortion industry is using medical supplies daily on elective and non-essential “surgeries”. Supplies like surgical masks and gloves, which will be in short supply should the infection rate of COVID-19 continue to spike. We must not allow abortion clinics to put profit ahead of the public welfare and continue with these elective surgical procedures which now are done at a greater risk to the patient as well as our community. Too often, abortions result in complications that lead to the emergency room and further drain our overstretched system.

Concerns have previously been raised regarding your actions and advocacy in support of

Wisconsin’s largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood, which operates 3 of the 4 standalone abortion facilities in our state. It is and should be a basic expectation that these abortion centers close while Wisconsin is under a “Shelter-in-Place” order to assure our residents that you are not putting politics before their health and prioritizing Planned

Parenthood’s bottom line at the expense of our citizens’ health. We therefore demand your immediate action to ensure a halt to the operation of abortion facilities in Wisconsin for the duration of the declared public health emergency.

Sincerely,

Senator André Jacque
1st Senate District

Senator Dave Craig
28th Senate District

Senator Alberta Darling
8th Senate District

Senator Scott Fitzgerald
13th Senate District

Senator Chris Kapenga

33rd Senate District

Senator Kathleen Bernier
23rd Senate District

Senator Devin LeMahieu
9th Senate District

Senator Howard Marklein
17th Senate District

Senator Steve Nass
11th Senate District

Senator Roger Roth
19th Senate District

Senator Duey Stroebel
20th Senate District

Senator Tom Tiffany
12th Senate District

Senator Van Wanggaard
21st Senate District

Representative Janel Brandtjen
22nd Assembly District

Representative Scott Allen
97th Assembly District

Representative Barbra Dittrich
38th Assembly District

Representative James Edming
87th Assembly District

Representative Rick Gundrum
58th Assembly District

Representative Cody Horlacher
33rd Assembly District

Representative Rob Hutton
13th Assembly District

Representative Bob Kulp
69th Assembly District

Representative Dave Murphy
56th Assembly District

Representative Jeffrey Mursau
36th Assembly District

Representative Adam Neylon
98th Assembly District

Representative John Nygren
89th Assembly District

Representative Tim Ramthun
59th Assembly District

Representative Joe Sanfelippo
15th Assembly District

Representative Michael Schraa
53rd Assembly District

Representative Jeremy Thiesfeldt
52nd Assembly District

Representative Ron Tusler
3rd Assembly District

Representative Chuck Wichgers
83rd Assembly District