

Milwaukee Area Labor Council: Statement of support for Safer at Home

Posted on Wednesday, Apr 22, 2020

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The members of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council are speaking up because we find the so-called “freedom” protests in Wisconsin extremely upsetting. These “liberty” protestors are seeking, to get a haircut or go to a bar, is not worth the lives of our friends, our co-workers, our health care providers.

In dealing with a pandemic of this nature, we must focus on the facts. The only reason deaths in Wisconsin are slowing is because of the efforts of our Governor and the Safer at Home order. Despite warnings that holding in-person voting on April 7th could lead to a spike in cases, state Republicans forged ahead, going to court to force people to choose leaving the safety of their home or foregoing their right to vote. On April 7th, the new case count was 138 and dropping – 10 days later the curve had turned upward and the new case count on 4/17 was 170.

The members of this council believe in science, we want to follow health department guidelines, we believe in putting people before profits and protecting Wisconsinites ahead of scoring political points.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at University of Washington tracking graph of daily deaths in Wisconsin due to COVID-19. On Election Day, April 7, deaths had dropped to 7 in the day, one week later the daily total was 16. Total deaths so far in Wisconsin are at 242.

We will continue to promote the facts because so many people seem to want to say “it’s not that bad,” perhaps because they don’t personally know anyone affected. In

one month's time, Wisconsin went from 0 to 4,000 cases. Last Thursday marked a new record for coronavirus deaths in the United States, with 4,591 people dying from the virus in just 24 hours. About the same number of Allied soldiers who died on D-Day. Does that give you a moment of pause? We hope it does. This is why safe-at-home orders have been extended. The fight against COVID-19 isn't over yet. The claim by State Republican leaders that Wisconsin "is clearly seeing a decline in COVID infections" was ruled False by Politifact. We call on them to stop promoting the voices of those who put corporate interests over workers lives and let's continue to work together to put our communities, our state, and our country back on the right track, safely.

Clearly the policy is working when you compare the numbers & projections from before the order to where we are now. But we are not under control yet and we need to keep doing what we are doing now to get under control. Lifting the order now would be a mistake and would undeniably cost more lives of Wisconsinites, including many of our members working on the front lines daily.

President Trump has stated he wants to open everything up as soon as possible to return to the "booming economy" he claims he helped create. At a time when we see entirely too many people facing household emergencies after missing 1 paycheck, it is apparent that the economy wasn't really booming for many people. As we work to put our shoulders to the wheel to protect and restore the country, we must do it in a way going forward that recognizes and places appropriate value on human capital. Workers are the value-creators, and they must return to work with safety and compensation packages that acknowledge their vital role.

Even though conditions in Wisconsin do not meet the re-opening criteria that President Trump's administration has outlined, former Governor Scott Walker was in the media last week calling the Safer at Home order a political "power grab." We know most Wisconsinites want a state government that weighs the facts at hand and make policy that helps the greatest number of people. We also know that the vast majority of people want leaders to focus on the well-being and safety of the populace first and foremost, and leave the combative partisan politics to the side at this time of national crisis. It is shameful that there is not enough of the correct PPE for all the workers that need it, and the blame for that falls on the Trump administration.

We will continue to fight for safe workplaces and the rights of workers on the job as

essential workers from many industries work tirelessly to meet our needs for food, shelter, transportation, energy, and of course health care. And we know that the best thing that non-essential businesses and workers can do to support these heroes is to abide by the Safer at Home policy.