

Rep. Quinn: Votes for COVID-19 bill

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Madison – In a historic moment, Representative Romaine Quinn (R-Barron) voted to pass Assembly Bill 1038, a bipartisan bill responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in Wisconsin. Approximately half of the Legislature, including Rep. Quinn, attended the session and cast votes remotely in order to support the social distancing provisions that have been needed to slow the spread of the virus and prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed.

The bill is a product of weeks of work and across-the-aisle negotiations to create certainty for individuals and industries in distress due to the pandemic. Provisions ensure that Wisconsin can tap into billions of dollars in federal funding and ensure that red tape does not delay or prevent solutions to resolving the crisis.

“People all across the district are feeling pain right now,” said Rep. Quinn. “Whether it’s small business owners struggling to keep their businesses going, workers who have been laid off, or people who are sick or have relatives who are sick, everyone needs reassurance that they are not alone. This bill says clearly that the pandemic is not a partisan issue – we are here to work with and for the people of Wisconsin and do everything in our power to help make the situation better.”

AB 1038 eliminates the one-week waiting period for unemployment claims and retroactively pays for the first week of unemployment for claims made after March 12. The bill also:

- Eases licensing requirements for health care professionals and emergency medical responders.
- Allows pharmacists to extend prescriptions.
- Expands SeniorCare to include coverage of vaccinations.

- Ensures no co-pays for COVID-19 testing.
- Prohibits health insurance coverage discrimination based on COVID-19.
- Provides the needed flexibilities to school districts to complete the school year online.
- Requires the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to develop a plan to assist the state's main industries (tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, construction and retail).

In addition to these regulatory steps, AB 1038 sets aside \$75 million to address unexpected priorities that may arise as a result of the economic or health consequences of the pandemic. The Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance will oversee this money on an as-needed basis to ensure that the state can respond appropriately to issues not covered by federal programs.

Wisconsin is also expected to receive approximately \$2.2 billion in federal support, which will be overseen by Governor Evers.