

# Rep. Stafsholt: Votes for COVID-19 response bill

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New Richmond, WI – State Representative Rob Stafsholt (R-New Richmond) voted for the COVID-19 Response Bill to help Wisconsin address the challenges from the coronavirus outbreak and assist individuals who are out of work. The legislation gives the Evers administration necessary flexibility and helps the state capture millions more in federal dollars. The Assembly approved the bill during Tuesday's historic extraordinary session, which was done with a large number of representatives participating virtually for the first time in our state history.

"It's been a very stressful and trying time for everyone in this state," said Rep. Stafsholt. "I'm pleased my Assembly colleagues and I could come together on this bipartisan bill, ensuring our state can better respond to the public health emergency while trying to protect the integrity of our state budget."

The COVID-19 Response Bill eliminates the one-week waiting period for unemployment insurance benefits. The change would be applied retroactively to claims made after March 12 and run through February 7, 2021.

The bill allows the state to capture more Medicaid dollars from the federal government, which will be helpful as more individuals may need to access the coverage due to a loss of work during the pandemic.

The legislation contains 55 different sections and provides for the following:

- Sets aside \$75 million to address future, unexpected needs that federal dollars don't cover
- Eases licensing requirements for health care professionals and emergency medical responders

- Allows pharmacists to extend prescriptions
- Expands SeniorCare to include coverage of vaccinations that aren't otherwise covered
- 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)

"I'm proud of the bipartisan negotiations that went into crafting this bill," said Rep. Stafsholt. "We are providing a level of certainty during these very uncertain times."

This legislation ensures Wisconsin will receive the entire \$2 billion in federal assistance that Governor Evers has sole discretion over spending. Assembly Republicans have asked the governor to prioritize the needs of the health care industry, workers, small businesses and local governments when allocating these dollars.

The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration on Wednesday.