

SEIU Healthcare: As Rep. Vos threatens partisan investigation into fair election, healthcare workers call out hypocrisy, demand action on COVID-19 crisis

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WISCONSIN — Following a decisive election in which high turnout of Black, Latinx, indigenous and working class voters overwhelmingly chose to elect Joe Biden, local Republican leaders have responded by attempting to throw doubt on the election process and to undermine the will of voters. In stark contrast to his refusal to bring the Assembly into session to address the COVID-19 crisis or protect frontline healthcare workers, Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) is now vowing to get to work on a sham investigation, based on spurious and politically motivated claims.

As COVID-19 cases and hospitalization rates worsen across the state, Wisconsin healthcare workers, who have for months called on the legislature to pass a Healthcare Heroes Act, are expressing outrage and disbelief at the Speaker's announcement.

"This crisis is getting worse by the day and our hospitals and facilities are in danger of being overwhelmed," said **Lisa Gordon, CNA in Monroe and member of SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin**. "Even through our fatigue, we keep showing up to dangerous stressful jobs because our patients need us. Meanwhile, Speaker Robin Vos and state Republican lawmakers have repeatedly refused to show up or take any action. Enough is enough. They need to get down to the real work of helping Wisconsin to combat this crisis and stop engaging in these ridiculous irresponsible theatrics."

Like much of the Midwest, Wisconsin communities are seeing a sharp rise in COVID, as daily cases continue to [break new records](#). In recent weeks, hospitals and facilities are reporting they are at or nearing capacity, and some areas have already opened [field hospitals](#). Meanwhile, high unemployment and economic downturn triggered by the virus continues to devastate working families and small businesses across the state. As jobless and frontline workers alike look to state lawmakers for support, their pleas have gone unanswered.

It has been over [209 days](#) since Speaker Robin Vos has called the legislature back into session to pass a bill. Earlier this year, on [June 29th](#), state Democratic leaders introduced a Healthcare Heroes Act in the legislature. The bill would ensure that every healthcare worker in Wisconsin has paid sick leave, hazard pay, and covering all the costs of COVID-19-related healthcare needs for frontline healthcare workers. Despite widespread support from almost every Senate and Assembly Democrat, Republican leadership has effectively stalled the Healthcare Heroes Act.

“Working on the front lines of this pandemic, I worry that I might contract COVID or give it to my family,” said **Pat Raes, a registered nurse in Madison and SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin member**. “Months into this pandemic, healthcare workers still don’t have adequate protections, support or tools we need to stay safe doing our vital jobs. So, for months, we’ve been organizing, calling, and emailing to demand a Healthcare Heroes Act. Politicians like Robin Vos have been quick to call us heroes, but ignore us when we tell them the action we need. The people of Wisconsin deserve leadership that will put our health and safety first.”

Throughout the pandemic, nurses and other healthcare workers have held actions and press conferences calling out the hypocrisy of Republican leadership for their eagerness to act swiftly and aggressively to undercut Gov. Evers’ efforts to protect public health, while refusing to take action to help Wisconsin combat this crisis.