

Sen. Carpenter: I was elected to do a job

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(MADISON)—Today, Senator Tim Carpenter issued the following statement regarding the virtual session of the Wisconsin State Senate:

“During this Coronavirus pandemic, every Wisconsinite has had their lives disrupted and turned upside down. Action was urgently needed to help people through this national emergency. However, for over a month, the State Legislature has done absolutely nothing to help our people. Instead they spent that time criticizing Governor Evers for the actions that he took in the face of an emergency.

“I take my duties as a State Senator very seriously, so when Governor Evers called a special session to postpone the April 7th election, I showed up for work. I was shocked to see that not a single Republican Senator bothered to show up to do their job that day.

“By refusing to even consider the Governor’s proposal in that special session, Republicans forced hundreds of thousands of Wisconsin voters to choose between exercising their right to vote and protecting their health and lives during a Coronavirus pandemic. When it came to caring about protecting the health and wellbeing of our citizens, Republican leaders basically said: “Frankly, we don’t give a damn.” Without making a single concession to the voters, our election workers, the National Guard, and the volunteers who make our elections possible,

Republicans forced them to needlessly expose themselves to the Coronavirus.

“Today, at 11:00am, these same Republican leaders are convening the first ever “virtual” Senate Session to finally address the pressing needs of our citizens. I have been told that these measures are necessary to protect Senators from possible exposure to COVID-19.

“The Republican Senate President Roger Roth is refusing to allow me to attend the session in person, even though I informed him of my intentions multiple times over the past month. This is preposterous.

“Republican Senators will not lift a finger to accommodate the voters of our state during the election, who were forced to risk their health and lives in order to fulfill their civic duty. But when it is time to take their votes as Senators, they have taken unprecedented actions to protect themselves, even barring members who have repeatedly requested to be able to attend session in person. There is enough room in our State Capitol building to accommodate the entire Senate in session, let alone a just the senators who would like the opportunity to attend in person, all while maintaining a safe distance from each other.

“Today, we are considering the most consequential piece of legislation this session; dealing with people’s lives, jobs, and our state’s way of life. Wisconsin is eligible to receive over two billion dollars in federal aid, but we must pass this legislation by April 17th to be in compliance with the federal requirements. Otherwise, we lose the opportunity to make use of those funds.

“Throughout the 2019-2020 Legislative Session, Senate Republican leaders have frequently cut Democratic Senators from speaking, they have denied my right to vote on the Senate Floor, and they have not been open and transparent in their handling of Senate procedures.

“The State Senate will be voting on extremely important legislation that effects the 5.8million residents of our great state. In the light of las Tuesday’s election, Senate President Roth does not have the right to deny me as an elected State Senator from attending session in person to discuss and vote on the COVID-19 relief bill.

“I was elected to do a job!