

Sen. Larson: Reaction to Sec. Pompeo's Madison visit

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Madison, WI - “At the State Capitol today, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo delivered a campaign speech disguised as a foreign policy address. Echoing campaign messaging that the President has been “tough on China,” Pompeo used our senate chamber as a prop to attack the Chinese government, blaming them for America’s failure to contain COVID-19. Despite Republicans’ refusal to meet and pass any legislation since April 15th, I want to be perfectly clear: our senate chamber is not a prop.

“We are in the middle of a deadly pandemic that has already claimed more than 1,250 Wisconsin lives, an economic and unemployment crisis, and a summer of social unrest caused by our refusal as a nation to address racial disparities in law enforcement. I find it ironic that the largest collection of Republican lawmakers in our Capitol in over five months was not for a legislative session to do the people’s business, but for a foreign policy speech in a swing state while voting is underway in an election year.

“Secretary Pompeo and the Trump Administration’s fixation on China is interesting, because they themselves are guilty of much of what they are accusing China of doing. Minimizing the threat of the virus? Check. Misleading the public with propaganda? Check. Interfering with the work of scientific professionals? Check. Attacking the media for accurately reporting what is happening? Check. The fact is that every other country on the planet has figured out a stronger way to tackle the coronavirus than Trump has. We continue to have more deaths, more cases, and less of a coherent plan than any other nation. One infomercial in our senate chamber doesn’t bring 200,000 Americans back to life.

“Wisconsin’s farmers and manufacturers know better than anyone that the Trump tariffs on China have done nothing but hurt working people, drive up costs, and force taxpayers to cover the extra subsidies. Wisconsin continues to lose family farms because of their ineptitude.

“As my GOP colleagues ponder meeting to overturn Governor Evers’ mask mandate, we could be implementing a real plan to contain the virus in our state. As they continue to attack the Governor for a backlog in unemployment claims, they could be passing legislation to undo the changes they made which made benefits harder to get. Instead of convening a toothless task force, they could be heeding the Governor’s special session call to pass police reform legislation they’ve been avoiding for years.

“Now is not the time for photo lines with Trump Administration officials, political speeches using public dollars, or scapegoating China for Republican’s own failures. The time is now to reconvene the legislature and do the people’s business. As Secretary Pompeo remarked in his speech, our senate chamber is beautiful, and deserves far more than to be used as a political prop.”