

Sen. Ringhand: On COVID-19; it didn't have to be this way

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Now that the spread of COVID-19 has hospitals, health care workers and communities throughout the state in danger of being overwhelmed, one thing is clear. It didn't have to be this way.

Since the day Governor Tony Evers was elected, Republican legislative leaders have refused to work with him. The first thing they did after the election was go into a lame duck legislative session to consolidate their power and create a taxpayer funded slush fund to hire private attorneys to challenge Governor Evers at every turn.

Instead of laying out a clear and comprehensive plan to deal with COVID-19, Republican leaders decided to hide behind their taxpayer funded lawyers and their wealthy benefactors at the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty. While it is easy to do nothing and hire high-priced lawyers when taxpayers pick up the tab, it is unconscionable to undermine the health and welfare of the very people who are footing the bill for their lawsuits.

I understand the difficulty that Majority Leader Fitzgerald and Speaker Vos face. The leader of their party, the President, refuses to listen to his own health experts. He publicly refutes the scientists and doctors who know how to defeat this virus. And he has openly mocked the wearing of masks. They are simply following their leader, and it has made things worse.

It has been more than 175 days since the pandemic began. There is still no plan from Republicans to fight COVID-19. Only lawsuits.

Republican's control the Legislature and they alone have the power to call the

legislature into session. Now is the time for them to do their job, work with the Governor and Democrats, and follow the science to get this virus under control.

Either way, the path to returning to any sense of normalcy is simple. Wear a mask in public. Avoid large gatherings. Practice social distancing. And wash your hands frequently.