

Sen. Stroebel: Time to reevaluate our COVID-19 policies in Wisconsin

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Madison, WI – State Senator Duey Stroebel (R-Cedarburg) released the following statement on COVID-19 in Wisconsin.

“This Sunday will mark one month since Governor Evers declared a public health emergency, and according to the prevailing national model^[1], we will be near the peak of COVID-19 growth in Wisconsin. This national model has revised down its predictions to a total of 424 Wisconsin deaths by August 4th. A March 26th document from the Department of Health Services shows an expected positive test count of 22,000 by April 8th, with 440 – 1500 people already infected who would eventually die. The trajectory of cases and deaths in Wisconsin is many times lower than the initial projections upon which Governor Evers and Secretary-Designee Palm based their policies. With COVID-19 patients only taking up about 13.3% of all ICU beds in Wisconsin, with about 29% of ICU space still available^[2], the concern of overwhelming our medical system is not as imminent or inevitable as it may have seemed previously.”

“As we enter this new phase of the COVID-19 response, I believe we need a fresh look to reevaluate our policy choices. Every sickness and death is a tragedy, but so are businesses and livelihoods ruined by shelter in place orders. The same rings true for the pronounced negative impacts on civil liberties and quality of life. Good policymaking is a cost/benefit analysis. There are benefits to health safety measures, but new data demands we rerun our analysis continuously. I doubt it made sense to close state parks on account of intermittent outdoor social distancing concerns given the real numbers.”

“Nationwide there are dramatic economic impacts from our COVID-19 prevention strategies. The coffers of Wisconsin will not be immune from the brakes being

slammed on our economy. Besides being counterproductive, indefinite sheltering orders will eventually lead to civil disobedience. We need to begin planning an orderly method of reopening our civil life in stages to refresh our economy and liberties soon. Even under optimum restart conditions, tough decisions will need to be made about our state finances. States can't print money like the federal government can."

"It is irresponsible to conceal the truth from Wisconsinites that we will likely be unable to live up to all the promises of the current state budget. I am not going to tell constituents, who are losing their businesses, getting laid off and seeing their nest eggs dip with the stock market to pay higher taxes so that state and local employees can avoid unpaid furloughs, or so that government programs can grow at twice the rate of inflation. We do not yet know what our fiscal challenges will look like in a few months, but these are challenges that will only get worse if we fail to reopen our society in a timely fashion."