

# Sen. Wirch: Calls out Senate Republicans' silence on homelessness legislation

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**Madison-** Senator Bob Wirch (D-Somers) is challenging his Republican colleagues in the State Senate to take action and come into session to pass a package of legislation to fight homelessness. The bills were passed on a bipartisan basis by the State Assembly in 2019. If they are not passed by the Senate by the end of the year, the bills would have to start the legislative process over again, causing a further delay.

“With each day that passes, the chance to do the right thing decreases. This holdup is inexcusable, and the silence and inaction by Senate Republicans actually speaks volumes about their priorities,” said Wirch.

In late 2018, the bipartisan Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness issued a series of recommendations for fighting the crisis of homelessness impacting all parts of our state. The recommendations were applauded by advocates for the homeless and championed by then-Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, who chaired the council at the time. Wirch authored a letter to incoming Governor Tony Evers and the co-chairs of the Joint Finance Committee, suggesting that these recommendations and the necessary funding be included in the 2019-2021 state budget. While the suggestion was taken, the Republican-controlled JFC inserted a provision depositing the funds in the Committee’s supplemental account, requiring separate legislation before it could be released. The eight-bill package was passed by the State Assembly, while the Senate has only passed one of the eight. A total of \$15 million to address homelessness hangs in the balance. Kenosha advocates and religious leaders recently held a “Solidarity Sleep Out” to bring awareness to the issue of homelessness.