

Senate Republicans: Letter to Gov. Evers

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Dear Governor Evers,

Last week, one of our colleagues sent you a letter with a series of questions about the “science” you have repeatedly said you are following in your response to the Coronavirus pandemic. To date, he has not received a response, although he did not ask for one prior to Friday.

Since that letter was sent, you have changed some of your public positions and created turmoil with others. Wisconsinites are confused. Some are scared, some are angry, and some just want to know the truth about what is happening in the state. They can handle the truth.

Wisconsinites aren't interested in political blame “games” and neither are we. They want to know the method to the madness. They want to know the “science” that is being used to make decisions. We share their frustration. To date, they, and we, have received nothing but the word “science” for an explanation of your decisions. But “science” isn't just a word. It is facts, data, evidence, and best practices.

The following questions are not political. They are not partisan. They are not “trap” or “gotcha” questions. We are asking them in good faith to greater understand your decisions. We ask, and the people of Wisconsin expect, that you answer them in the same good faith manner in which they are asked using the facts, data, evidence and best practices, the “science” you used in making your decisions.

1- How many people in Wisconsin that tested positive for the disease no longer test positive for the disease? That is to say, how many people have “recovered”,

according to testing results

2- When putting in place your order for the initial four weeks, it was explained that this time period was chosen for the purpose of preventing the disease's spread for two, 2-week, incubation periods. What in the science of the disease has changed that now recommends four-and-a-half, 2-week, incubation periods?

3- You have extended "Safer at Home" until May 26, 2020. What evidence do you have that a 9-week quarantine order will decrease the infection and death rate from COVID-19?

4- You extended your "Safer at Home" order only 3-weeks into its initial period. Given that the initial order was not concluded before your extension, the data from the initial order is incomplete. How did you conclude from incomplete data that the quarantine must be more than doubled?

5- What are the specific criteria used to determine if someone has died specifically because of COVID-19, as opposed to an underlying health condition?

6- How many people have required hospitalization specifically for COVID-19 and not underlying health conditions and how many have required treatment in ICUs or with ventilators? What is the current (as of the day of your response) number of people a) hospitalized, b) in ICU, and c) on ventilators in Wisconsin? What percentage of Wisconsin's health care capacity does that represent?

7- The state is not tracking active vs. recovered cases. Why not? Wouldn't this information be beneficial in making decisions about reopening Wisconsin?"

8- Why does Wisconsin's "Safer at Home" order last longer than all but Virginia's? Similarly, why does every other Midwestern state, neighboring state and "partnering" state lift their "Safer at Home" order 3-4 weeks prior to Wisconsin?

9- On Thursday you announced you were partnering with Ohio, Michigan, Indiana,

Illinois, Kentucky and Minnesota to reopen Wisconsin's economy, yet every one of those states lifts their "Safer at Home" order prior to Wisconsin, and none have released a reopening plan. Is Wisconsin partnering with these other states or not?

10- Your extended "Safer at Home" order expires on May 26, 2020, yet you cancelled school for the remainder of the school year, which is generally the first or second week on June. Why did you cancel school for an additional 2-3 weeks following the expiration of the Safer at Home order? Why is it safe for people to "start going back to normal" on May 26, but not safe for children to go to school until September? Again, please use science and data in your answer.

11- Similarly, while Emergency Order #28 closes schools for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, your Badger Bounce Back plan (Emergency Order #31) says that schools may reopen during Phase 2 of your plan. Which one is correct?

12- How many "elective" surgeries have been postponed or delayed during your Public Health Emergency? Has there been any quantification of the economic costs of the delays to hospitals and patients? How many deaths have occurred because of these delays? To the extent you have any documentation, please provide it under Wisconsin's Open Records Law.

13- How many colonoscopies and mammograms have been forced to be cancelled because of our public health emergency? Given the typical rate of cancer discovery during colonoscopies and mammograms, how many people do you estimate have colon or breast cancer but are unaware because of a delayed or postponed colonoscopy or mammogram?

14- There is anecdotal evidence of the increase in suicides during the public health emergency. How many people have taken their own lives, or attempted to, since Emergency Order #12, and how does that number compare with the same time period last year?

15- How many police calls for domestic abuse and child abuse have been made

since

Emergency Order #12, and how does that compare to the same time period last year?

16- The evidence provided by your Department of Health Services finds that 84% of Wisconsin's COVID-19 cases and 85% of COVID-19 deaths come from 9 of Wisconsin's 72 counties, and that most of these counties are located in southeastern Wisconsin. What is the rationale for keeping the remaining 63 counties and 4 million people homebound and out of work given their miniscule infection rate?

17- President's Trump's plan to reopen the American economy allows for regionalization.

Yours does not. Why does your plan not allow for regionalization?

18- President Trump's plan to reopen the American economy called for a 14-day downward

trajectory in positive COVID-19 cases or a 14-day downward trajectory of positive COVID-19 tests as a percentage of total tests taken. Your plan, as you have repeatedly described it, requires 14 straight days of decreasing positive tests and a 14-day downward trajectory of positive COVID-19 tests as a percentage of total tests taken. Why require 14 straight days of decreasing positive tests instead of a 14-day downward trajectory?

19- As of April 21, 2020, Wisconsin has tested 51,461 people in the last month. Your "Badger Bounce Back" plan requires 85,000 tests per week, more than 60% more tests per week as have been given total in the past month. Why did you decide on a total of 85,000 required tests per week?

20- Given the nationwide shortage of testing materials and capacity, when you do expect that Wisconsin will reach capacity of 85,000 tests per week?

21- How many businesses does your administration estimate will be forced to close permanently due to the Safer at Home order? To the extent your office has written documentation, please provide it under Wisconsin's Open Records Law.

22- How many Wisconsin businesses have applied for the 2020 or PPP program, and how many employees are employed by those businesses?

23- How many jobs does your administration estimate will be lost due to the Safer at Home order? To the extent you have written documentation, please provide it under Wisconsin's Open Records Law.

24- You have closed 40 state parks. How many state workers are employed at those 40 parks, and how many have been furloughed since the parks have been closed? When will those parks reopen?

25- How does prohibiting the use of public boat launches stop the spread COVID-19?

These are not unreasonable questions. They are questions based on decisions you have already made based on, in your words, "science." We are asking to know the science behind those decisions.

We do not ask these questions as part of a political "game." This is not a game to us, or to the millions of Wisconsinites impacted by your decisions. There are people literally afraid for their lives. Others are afraid for their livelihoods, their jobs, their neighbors and their way of life. They worry that Wisconsin may never recover from this pandemic.

We look forward to your response, prior to Monday, April 27, 2020.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Senator Kathy Bernier
31st District

Senator David Craig
28th District

Senator Alberta Darling
8th District

Senator Chris Kapenga
33rd District

Senator Dale Kooyenga
5th District

Senator Devin LeMahieu
9th District

Senator Howard Marklein
17th District

Senator Duey Stroebel
20th District

Senator Patrick Testin
24th District

Senator Tom Tiffany
12th District

Senator Van Wanggaard
21st District