

Tony Kurtz: The return to normalcy must begin soon

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Governor Evers' decision to extend the stay at home order through May 26th is ill-advised. Instead, I believe that Wisconsin needs to start taking prudent steps toward ending this shutdown and re-starting our state; lives and livelihoods depend on it.

I've been watching the numbers, and have been pleased at Wisconsin's performance in the fight against COVID-19. Instead of the projected 22,000 cases and 1,500 fatalities, our state has seen fewer than 4,000 cases to this point. We are taking the pandemic seriously, and our social distancing has gone a long way toward limiting the disease's spread.

Those businesses that have been allowed to remain open have paved the way and have proved that these health measures work. Grocery stores, lumber yards, gas stations, and many others have marked six foot intervals in their stores and have provided shields to protect employees and customers. Now is the time to follow their example and formulate a detailed plan to reopen Wisconsin's economy as safely as we possibly can.

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The Governor's most recent order does exactly the opposite. Instead of offering details, benchmarks, or alternatives, he simply extended the shutdown for another six weeks. If this stands, it will destroy many of the small businesses that are the backbone of our economy. Lives will be ruined. Recently, I've talked with dozens of small business owners across the 50th District who are profoundly concerned for

the future, both for themselves and for their employees.

Keeping Wisconsin's economy locked down without also issuing a plan for its revival is hurting our communities. Unemployment rates in the state have skyrocketed, and nearly 400,000 men and women have already filed claims. Now is the time for leadership. My colleagues and I want to work with Governor Evers, health experts, and business leaders to plan how to safely re-open businesses and jump start the economy. Unfortunately, there was no consultation with the legislature prior to the issuing of this order. If he had, I think he would better understand that our state can't function without farms, small businesses, and the people who own or work on them. I urge the Governor to reconsider his decision and instead work with experts and every level of government to come up with a more effective resolution to our handling of the pandemic's effects.

-Kurtz, R-Wonewoc, represents the 50th Assembly District.