

Wisconsin Voices: Statement on Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling against “Safer at Home”

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MILWAUKEE — As unfortunately expected, the Wisconsin Supreme Court has ruled against the Safer at Home mandate.

This is an irresponsible and dangerous decision that was made with political calculations, not epidemiological ones. Future generations will view this incredible disregard for human life, particularly in the Black and Brown communities that are being disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, as one of the darkest and most mournful eras of Wisconsin’s history.

In under two months, Wisconsin has gone from 32 cases to over an astonishing 9,000. And that’s just the cases we know about. It is certain that there are many, many unreported cases with many people very ill in their homes. The blatant discarding of Wisconsinites’ health by our Supreme Court justices is akin to signing off on a massacre. Loved ones are dying alone, not allowed any visitors as they take their last stilted breath. Husbands dying without saying goodbye to their wives. Mothers dying without seeing their children one last time. Children not getting to say goodbye. And no proper funerals or rituals, or even acknowledgment of our collective monumental loss that might allow us to grieve together. The societal trauma of this moment is going to impact all of our wellbeings for generations.

We implore Governor Evers and the legislative leadership to make necessary adjustments for the safety of their constituents. This includes declaring Safer at Home an official recommendation, with the mandate that if non-essential businesses choose to reopen, employees cannot be fired for choosing to stay home. Additionally, businesses that choose to reopen should be required to contribute

funds into a liability account to pay for sick leave and treatment for any employees who contract COVID-19 after coming back to work.

Every person who is considered an essential worker must receive hazard pay as the bare minimum. In addition, their workplaces should be monitored to ensure they are providing adequate protective equipment, mandated and scientifically accepted infection control policies.

In order to ensure that people are able to stay home, the government must provide monthly stipends and place a moratorium on rent and mortgage. The banks will be fine for a few months. They've been bailed out before. It's time to bail out the people.

As hotbeds of contamination without any respite for distancing, prisons have become labs for grotesque virology observation. People who are incarcerated are unwilling participants in an experiment that may kill them. While other states have taken bold steps to protect people's health, Governor Evers' administration has only reduced the prison population by a mere 1.3%. Yet he has pledged to reduce the state's prison population by half — what better time than now? It's time to heed public health experts' advice and immediately release individuals in detention who are at high risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19.

These are a few of the many metrics that need to be met in order for Wisconsinites to be well. We can pull through by pulling together, like we have done in the past. We must stand united against the handful of politicians and industries that would use this crisis to generate profits rather than keep us safe. We condemn those who revel in misinformation in order to further divide us so we don't join together to demand proven solutions like universal healthcare, paid time to care, and protections that keep us in our homes and ensure we make ends meet.