

WisDems: State Treasurer Godlewski, DPW Chair Wikler, local business owners call out Trump administration's failure to help small business community

Posted on Thursday, Apr 30, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

(MADISON, WI) — Today, Wisconsin State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski, Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Ben Wikler, Morris Ramen Owner and Leader of the Culinary Ladies Collective Francesca Hong, and Tangled Up Hue Owner Erin Klaus slammed the Trump administration's failure to help small businesses through PPP and EIDL funds.

On the call, every speaker highlighted Trump and his administration's failure to protect small and medium size businesses with the PPP and EIDL they are entitled to, while using that money to further enrich giant corporations and his allies.

[See below for what the speakers said or watch the full press conference here.](#)

DPW Chair Ben Wikler: "Main streets across Wisconsin have had to close their doors because the public health safety risk that Trump allowed to go forward is so great. House Democrats have led the charge providing funding to small and medium-sized businesses that so desperately need funds, in the hopes that they can one day reopen their doors. But while Democrats have done their job, Trump and his administration created plans that were littered with holes that allowed giant corporations to get millions of dollars. The website that the Trump administration built for companies to apply for loans repeatedly crashed and was inaccessible at

moments when people urgently needed to use it. Even the paperwork required to apply for support is incredibly complicated and hard to navigate, leaving us all to wonder if it was designed so that some companies would just throw in the towel and those that could afford expensive lobbyists and lawyers would be the only ones to receive the funds to which all businesses were entitled.”

State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski: “Despite their best efforts, many small businesses here in Wisconsin have been left behind. As the State Treasurer I’ve been talking with business owners from across the state and hearing how businesses are weathering this financial storm, and the message that I’m getting from these hard-working Wisconsinites is they feel the Trump Administration has picked Wall Street over Main Street...[Big] companies seem to have avenues to capital, and they are taking advantage of this program on the backs of small businesses and on taxpayers...These stories really hit home for me, because prior to being state treasurer, I was a small business owner. In fact, my work was focused on helping to finance startups and micro-businesses. I loved working side by side with these businesses, and these business owners are some of the hardest working people I know and did incredible things for their communities...small business owners don’t want a handout, they want a program that is fair, transparent, and accountable... Our small businesses in this state are essential to our economy. We simply cannot afford to have Main Street take a back seat to Wall Street.”

Morris Ramen Co-Owner and Culinary Ladies Collective Leader Francesca Hong: “Navigating the PPP has been a living hell and stressful. Of the forty-some businesses that make up our collective, only a couple of us have gotten a PPP or EDIL fund. We are going to use those funds to continue to pay our employees and we’ll use what’s left to pay for utilities and rent. To show how inadequate this is, it’s merely a bandaid, we won’t be able to pay for rent for the rest of the year, and we’ll only be able to cover maybe 25% of payroll costs...What’s been clear through all this is that so much of this could have been preventable had the Trump Administration take coronavirus seriously from its onset, it’s hard to imagine that we would be in this situation...The money that Congress allocated to businesses like ours is going to giant chain restaurants, publicly traded corporations, the Lakers, [and] Trump’s financial buddies. He and his administration are the ones who are supposed to be regulating how these hundreds of billions of dollars are being doled out, and they’ve been perfectly clear that their priority is not to help small businesses on Main Street, and certainly not to help minority business owners. If Trump doesn’t get his act together, things are only going to get worse.”

Tangled Up Hue Co-Owner Erin Klaus: “As a business owner, you do everything, you make every decision everyday, and you’re confident about it...What I quickly found out was that all of the information I was researching was not communicated correctly and across the board, people had no idea how to handle this. The first thing we did was apply for the emergency disaster loan, hearing that if we submitted this application, \$10,000 would be made available in three days...I filled out about a fifty page application with questions I couldn’t answer because it did not necessarily apply to our partnership, reaching out to the SBA asking for answers on how to do this with literally no guidance or available answers to do this correctly...The Trump administration was confusing everything and not following through on promises, so we decided to start a GoFundMe page, and that decision was not made lightly. It is not something that a business wants to necessarily put out there for the public to see how vulnerable you can be...Every day on the news we are hearing new stories about how there is money there, and there is a massive disconnect between what the Trump administration is putting out and what the general population is understanding...It’s really disheartening to hear about the big businesses getting millions of dollars when really what we’re asking for is a drop in the bucket to keep our business around and keep our employees having food on their tables.”

Additional Background:

Democrats in Congress led the charge to pass billions of dollars in funding for the small and medium-size businesses that are suffering because of Trump’s delayed and inadequate response to the Coronavirus pandemic. His administration, which is responsible for dispersing the funds, has prioritized giving out loans to [large corporations](#), giant food chains, and some of [Trump’s personal associates over](#) the small and medium-sized businesses that really need them. This has added up to billions of PPP and EIDL funds.

Trump and his administration even botched the rollout, with their application website crashing, the banks who help local businesses not receiving clear guidance on the application process, and a clear lack of guidance to let companies know how they can spend the money they receive.