

GOP bill would place new limits on government powers during a pandemic

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Two GOP lawmakers are circulating legislation that would rein in government powers during a pandemic, including a provision that would ban sweeping stay-at-home orders.

Among other things, the two bills would mandate governors get approval from at least two legislative leaders before declaring a public health emergency.

The bills are being circulated by Rep. Joe Sanfelippo, R-New Berlin, and Sen. Eric Wimberger, R-Green Bay.

In addition to banning orders to stay at home, one bill would require the Department of Health Services or local health officials to petition a court to isolate individuals with a communicable disease. That process would include providing the court a statement from a health care provider that the individual is suspected of having a communicable disease and providing evidence the person hasn't complied with mitigation measures.

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The proposed requirements in the bill are similar to what's now in place for someone suspected of having tuberculosis.

The second bill includes a provision requiring a gov to get the OK from at least two of the four top legislative leaders to issue a public health emergency.

The bill also would ban governors from issuing successive orders declaring a state of emergency based on circumstances arising from the same disaster or public

health crisis.

That issue is at the heart of a case that was argued before the state Supreme Court in November. The court has yet to issue a ruling in the case.