

Rep. Subeck: Decries Assembly Republicans for putting politics ahead of people

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MADISON – Today, the Assembly Committee on Health met to consider Assembly Bill 1 (AB 1), which was introduced by Assembly Republicans yesterday under the guise of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. After eight months of inaction, a slew of lawsuits to thwart the Governor’s ability to address the public health crisis, and thousands of lives lost to COVID-19 in Wisconsin, Republicans are now taking swipes at the ability of local communities to address local impacts of the pandemic in a bill that does more to protect big corporations and special interests than it does for the people of our state.

“Republicans continue to speak out of both sides of their mouth by claiming to want bipartisan compromise and solutions while offering legislation chock-full of poison pills that they know fails to address the public health and economic challenges of the pandemic,” said Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison), who serves as the ranking Democratic member of the Health Committee. “Their bill protects corporations and special interests, yet fails to protect Wisconsinites from this deadly disease.”

Wisconsin needs a COVID-19 plan that protects people, not big corporations, yet the Republican bill provides broad immunity for businesses if they ignore public health orders and someone gets COVID-19 as a result. AB 1 also adds a new layer of red tape and slows down the state’s response by requiring a legislative approval process before deploying federal funds to combat the pandemic. And the bill places

new restrictions on local communities and school districts, limiting their ability to respond to the pandemic.

“It is crystal clear that Wisconsin Republicans are listening only to their special interest allies,” said Rep. Subeck. “Thousands of Wisconsinites have died during eight months of Republican inaction, and now they are set to fast-track a special interest wish list that puts politics over the health and well-being of our state.”

In an incredible show of hypocrisy, Assembly Speaker Robin Vos did not wear a mask as he testified at the hearing about a bill purported to address COVID-19. Some committee members, including the committee chairperson, were also without masks. Prior to the hearing, the chairperson denied a request that individuals be allowed to participate virtually to protect the health of members, staff, and the public. Democratic members of the committee watched the hearing on Wisconsin Eye from their offices. Democrats attended the Executive Session to cast votes on the bill, and all voted against the bill.

“Our residents, small businesses, and communities need action that prioritizes their health and economic security, not more political grandstanding by Republicans,” said Rep. Subeck. “I voted ‘no’ today because the bill falls far short of what Wisconsin needs to address the pandemic and actually slows down our response through new limitations and bureaucracy. Instead of more political theater, Republicans should work together with the Governor and legislative Democrats to protect the health and safety of our communities and provide economic relief for our families and small businesses.”

Rep. Lisa Subeck represents the 78th Assembly District, is the ranking Democratic member of the Assembly Committee on Health, and serves as the Vice-Chair of the Assembly Democratic Caucus.