

SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin, Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals: Healthcare workers condemn move by Republican state lawmakers to overturn mask mandate

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WISCONSIN — Following Senate Republicans introduction of a joint resolution to overturn Governor Evers' statewide mask mandate, frontline healthcare workers slammed the move as a dangerous step backward in containing the spread of COVID-19 and urged lawmakers to focus on legislation that will help meet the needs of frontline healthcare workers and save lives.

Healthcare workers from SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin and Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals, the leading unions that represent healthcare workers in Wisconsin, issued the following statements:

“Healthcare workers have been at the forefront of this crisis, putting our lives on the line to care for our patients. We should be able to count on our elected officials to do everything in their power to support us. Instead, we see them trying to take us backwards, vowing to undo critical, widely-supported public health measures in order to score political points.

The evidence is clear. Wearing a mask is proven to be effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping the public safe. As the cases continue to climb, we need to keep common-sense measures in place to help keep our hospitals and

frontline healthcare workers and first responders from being overwhelmed.

Too many Wisconsites have already lost loved ones to this deadly virus. Enough is enough. Republican leaders get to work on the action Wisconsin needs by passing legislation that will meet the needs of healthcare workers who continue to do vital jobs protecting the public.”

-Ramon Argandona, Madison hospital worker and President of SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin

“Though there is hope on the horizon with the vaccine distribution, healthcare workers who have been going above and beyond during this pandemic know that the time of crisis is far from over. It is shameful to see Republican lawmakers making a show of overturning the mask mandate that is critical to containing this virus and keeping our patients and the public safe.

For months, healthcare workers have been telling lawmakers exactly what we need: legislation that provides healthcare workers and first responders critical support, including paid sick leave, pandemic pay, no-cost testing and treatment for any COVID-19-related condition, and full, no-questions-asked workers compensation coverage for COVID-19. Instead of passing this necessary legislation and showing their support for the frontline workers they call heroes, Republican lawmakers are putting politics before people. Once again, we are demanding that they do their jobs and put the health and wellbeing of the people first.”

-Jeff Weber, Registered Nurse in Milwaukee and President of WI Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals