

SEIU: Healthcare workers slam republican state lawmakers for ending mask mandate; applaud Gov. Evers for correcting course

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WISCONSIN — Today, after Republican state representatives voted to overturn Governor Evers' statewide mask mandate, Gov. Evers responded by signing a public health order and Emergency Order #1 to require face coverings in public. Frontline healthcare workers and first responders expressed outrage at Republican lawmakers and praise for Governor Evers swift action to correct course.

Healthcare workers from SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin, one of the leading unions that represents healthcare workers in Wisconsin, issued the following statement:

“Republican leaders who voted to end the statewide mask mandate are failing in their duty to protect the health and wellbeing of the people of this state. Trying to eliminate the mask mandate shows disrespect to the people of Wisconsin and especially to those of us working on the front lines, providing critical services during this crisis, whether in hospitals and clinics, grocery stores or elsewhere.

As healthcare workers at the bedside of sick patients, we see the toll of this virus firsthand. We mourn our patients who have lost their lives to COVID and see the long-term struggles for others who will have developed chronic issues that will be with them for the rest of their lives.

Rather than honor the sacrifices and commitment of healthcare workers and first responders, Republican lawmakers chose to put us in harm's way so they could play politics. It is outrageous that Republican politicians have not lifted a finger to pass

meaningful COVID relief, but worked to pass legislation that would only make this crisis worse.

Healthcare workers are relieved to see Governor Evers rebuke this dangerous move. We know the statewide mask mandate is effective in slowing down the spread, in helping frontline healthcare workers to not be overwhelmed. We thank Governor Evers for again hearing the call of healthcare workers and doing what is right for public health.

As this pandemic continues and new variants of COVID-19 spread, healthcare workers will continue to do all we can to protect our patients and the public. We deserve politicians who will show us the respect they claim to have and who will work alongside us to help combat this virus and get Wisconsin back to where it needs to be.”

-Pat Raes, Registered Nurse in Madison and member leader of SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin