

Assembly passes bill limiting a governor's emergency powers

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The Assembly voted 59-35 along party lines to pass a bill limiting a governor's emergency powers.

Under AB 912, the governor would be prohibited from declaring businesses as "essential" or "nonessential" in emergencies. That means that any order affecting businesses would have to apply to all of them equally.

Early on in the pandemic, Gov. Tony Evers issued a stay-at-home order requiring nonessential businesses to close.

Republicans argued that certain businesses should not be prioritized over others and that the gov's actions hurt small businesses.

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"The vote is green like the money that these small businesses lost," author Rep. Rob Swearingen, R-Rhineland said.

Rep. Scott Allen critiqued Evers' State of the State address as hypocritical. Allen said it was like when "you go into the emergency room and the attending physician pulls out a gun and shoots you and then says, 'Here, let me help you with your injury.'"

Allen cited research he said showed lockdowns are not effective to control the virus.

Rep. Robyn Vining criticized Allen for using a metaphor evoking gun violence and reminded Allen that representatives are leaders in the state that people look to.

"Words matter," the Wauwatosa Dem said.

Rep. Tony Kurtz said that if words matter, the governor should not have accused Republicans of causing COVID-19 deaths during the State of the State address.

“You have the audacity to say that words matter — those words matter as well. I took that offensively,” the Wonewoc Republican said.