

Protect Our Care: Moore, Slavitt highlight how republicans have prolonged the pandemic, continue to put Wisconsinites at risk

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WISCONSIN — Protect Our Care hosted a virtual roundtable today marking two years of living with “COVID-19.” US Representative Gwen Moore and the Honorable Andy Slavitt, a former member of President Joe Biden’s COVID-19 task force, were joined by Wisconsinites from northwest and south central Wisconsin to discuss the ways Republicans like US Sen. Ron Johnson have prolonged the ongoing pandemic by spreading misinformation, promoting unproven and unsafe treatments, and downplaying life-saving vaccines.

As we enter year three of life with COVID-19 in the United States, it is an important time to reflect on what has been lost, and understand the choices Republicans made which prolonged the pandemic and significantly delayed America’s return to normal.

A former member of President Joe Biden’s COVID-19 task force, the Honorable Andy Slavitt, kicked off the discussion on a profound note, saying:

“It is important to reflect, and there are things we can say today that would have previously unthinkable before the pandemic. The fact that we’ve lost 900,000

people is something that if we would have contemplated two years ago would have been just horrifying to consider. But we've had another victim, one that I didn't anticipate fighting to save every day, and that victim is the truth."

Slavitt went on to recount former President Donald Trump's choice to keep the full danger of the coronavirus pandemic from the American people, as revealed on tapes recorded by famed journalist Bob Woodward. He also directly criticized Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson for spreading misinformation throughout the pandemic.

"He (Johnson) has been a part of prolonging the pandemic by spreading misinformation about vaccines, by promoting conspiracy theories and treatments that just don't work."

Rachael Ulberg, a CNA from northwest Wisconsin has experienced the cost of misinformation within her own family. A caregiver for an aging parent, Ms. Ulberg has a middle-school-aged student and has seen the impact of the pandemic in her own life across generations of her family.

"In the last two years I have become increasingly discouraged as I try to help care for my dad, because misinformation has definitely been divisive in my family and impacted my dad's care," said Ulberg.

Dr. Rachel Hughes, an emergency room physician in south central Wisconsin, noted the harrowing images she has encountered in the second full year of the pandemic, including pregnant women with COVID-19 on ventilators. Dr. Hughes expressed the frustration felt by so many health care workers faced with having to surmount misinformation, saying "As a health care worker, if I have a problem with my car I would not ask my fellow physicians (for help), I would go to my mechanic!"

US Representative Gwen Moore wrapped up the program with a reminder that not a single Republican legislator voted for the American Rescue Plan which has increased access to vaccines and diagnostic testing that have helped make progress on the pandemic despite the swirl of misinformation.

Rep. Moore also expressed her frustration at the politicization of the virus. “We can’t blame this virus on President Trump, or President Biden, or Senator Johnson. But we can blame people for not leaning forward to try and stop the heartbreak. It just didn’t have to be this bad,” she said, decrying the fact that partisan identification is the largest indicator of vaccination status in America.

You can watch the event [here](#), and learn more about how Republicans have prolonged the pandemic [here](#).