



BARBARA DITTRICH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 38th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

For Immediate Release
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May 11, 2020
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Rep. Dittrich Supports Safe Reopening for State

Oconomowoc – Representative Barbara Dittrich (*R-Oconomowoc*), vice chair of the Assembly Committee on Workforce Development, made the following statement regarding business closures and stay-at-home orders resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak:

“When the COVID-19 outbreak began to affect the state, people complied. Fearful of the virus and uncertain because of dire predictions, Wisconsinites rose to the occasion. Citizens and businesses alike sought to ‘flatten the curve,’ avoiding overwhelming of our healthcare system. Parents faithfully juggled schooling their students at home while also attempting to attend to job responsibilities. Churches creatively pivoted to drive-in and online services in order to provide spiritual support to the faithful.

“Since that time, these same citizens have had their cooperation repaid with over a half-a-million workers filing for unemployment, businesses being permanently shuttered, and students being deprived of proms, athletics, and graduation ceremonies. We have seen our state and local economy take a drastic downturn. Occurring at the same time, approximately 7 individuals in the Oconomowoc area have been diagnosed with coronavirus, 2 deaths in Jefferson County have been ascribed to the illness, and Dane County’s challenges have centered around the City of Madison.

“In that period I have responded to hundreds of e-mails and phone calls overwhelmingly requesting that we end this shutdown. I have been asked why arbitrary decisions were made that deemed a large retailer like Walmart “essential” while a small dog groomer providing curbside service was forced to close. Constituents have been ticketed and fined for attempting to social distance in a state park as well as offer some form of business that would stay within health guidelines. Shutdown of “elective” healthcare procedures and visits has left one constituent with a heart working at only approximately 15% of capacity because of delayed surgery. Another constituent has expressed the extreme emotional distress of their child with special needs because of this quarantine. Neighbor has turned on neighbor and confusion has been constant.

“It is time to empower Wisconsinites to move forward with their lives making informed decisions about their health. We need to stop treating people like children who need to be policed by the state. Small businesses have poured their labor and life savings into their work, making up



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the very fabric of our communities. They must be allowed to restore their livelihoods and the jobs that they provide to workers in serious need of employment. Preventative and routine health care must be restored to put an end to the groundswell of acute health crises that have resulted from postponed treatment. Worshippers must see an end to being forced to practice their faith only in their home or closed in a vehicle.

“While this illness has proved to be serious and occasionally fatal (just under 4% as of this statement), the public has received adequate, detailed resources to make informed decisions on operating business, attending worship services, engaging in outdoor activities, and attending school. **ALL WORKERS IN WISCONSIN ARE ESSENTIAL** and they need to be treated as such. Businesses and vulnerable populations have every incentive to take the proper precautions to stay safe in this outbreak without continued government overreach. Although government can make advisories on best practices, it is up to our communities to engage strategies that best fit their area. Consumers have the ability to walk away from any event or location where they may feel unsafe.

“I trust the good people of Wisconsin to use common sense in reopening the state. As I speak with local business owners, I am inspired by the wisdom they are exerting in setting plans in place. Citizens are also discussing measures they intend to take in keeping themselves and their loved ones well.

“It is time to stop the repression of citizens’ constitutional rights and allow adults to proceed with common sense and personal responsibility.”

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