



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GOP Puts Politics Over Protections, Evers Restores Mask Requirement

MADISON - Today Assembly Republicans voted to strike down the state public health emergency order and the associated mask requirement. Like when the proposal passed the State Senate, the vote today saw bipartisan opposition to the move, with seven Republicans also voting to oppose the measure. Nearly 60 organizations representing doctors, schools, churches, chambers of commerce, unions, health advocates, tribes, and a vast spectrum of Wisconsin professions and associations had registered against the resolution. No one registered in support of the move.

As a result of the legislative vote, Governor Evers issued a new emergency order and mask requirement, citing the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the risk to the health of the citizens of the state without an adequate response.

Representative Tod Ohnstad (D-Kenosha) offered the following statement:

"I was dismayed at the decision by my Republican colleagues to go forward with the vote today, but was glad to see Governor Evers exercise the executive authority provided to him to maintain this common sense safety measure with a renewed public health order.

The emergency is in many ways more pronounced now than it was when prior emergency orders were issued, as new and more contagious variants are spreading before we have vaccinated a sufficient amount of our citizens. Emergency protections must last as long as the emergency does. Public health should not be politicized and rejecting our last line of defense would be a step backward as we work to get our lives back to normal.

Our state is on the brink of 6,000 fatalities as a result of the coronavirus. Legislators should not be so foolish to think they know better than the doctors and scientists who confirm face masks can help control the spread and save lives.

While Kenosha fortunately has a local ordinance in place that maintains the requirement regardless of a statewide directive, the virus does not recognize city lines and we are all better protected with a consistent statewide approach."

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