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REPUBLICANS COST WISCONSINITES WITH THEIR LATEST POWER GRAB

Sen. Smith's Statement regarding Passage of Senate Bill 183

MADISON – After months of inaction, Senate Republicans passed SB 183 which would undermine Governor Evers' response to the COVID pandemic and delay financial assistance for local recovery efforts.

Republicans' inaction has already significantly cost Wisconsinites, especially when it comes to supporting unemployed workers. Wisconsin lost \$25 million in March 2020 by not waiving the one-week waiting period. The American Rescue Plan Act, recently signed by President Biden, increased the reimbursement rate from 50% to 100% for states that opt to waive the one-week waiting period for unemployed workers. Beginning on March 15th, Wisconsin started losing an estimated \$2.3 million per week by not extending the waiver for the one-week waiting period according to the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

Senator Jeff Smith (D – Brunswick) introduced an amendment on the Senate floor today to extend the one-week waiting period waiver until September to align Wisconsin with federal law. Republicans rejected this amendment, which will cost Wisconsin \$2.3 million per week. This is not the first time Republicans turned down federal funds to help their constituents. Republicans continue to be outspoken against BadgerCare expansion despite the additional \$2 billion Wisconsin is expected to receive.

"Republicans haven't acted with urgency or seriousness during this pandemic, but now they're eager to get in the way of our recovery," said Sen. Smith. "They've used this pandemic as a political tool to get what they want. And what they want in the end is to take away the Governor's authority despite him being the leader Wisconsinites elected.

"Republicans screwed up last year when Wisconsin lost \$25 million for unemployed workers. They missed another deadline just last week, jeopardizing even more federal unemployment money. Republicans continue to refuse taking billions of Medicaid dollars up for grabs. Republicans have a lot of gall asking for more authority when they can't even do their jobs.

"We can't trust Republicans to manage these federal funds. Our local communities are depending on these funds to be distributed efficiently. Republicans' record of ignoring Wisconsinites' voices already speaks for itself. Governor Evers is doing exactly what needs to be done – it's up to the Legislature to support him."

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