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“If We’ve Only Got One Shot, We Have to Get This Right”

Reps. Brostoff and Cabrera Statement on AB 1038

MILWAUKEE – In response to their vote against Assembly Bill (AB) 1038 earlier today, State Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee) and State Rep. Marisabel Cabrera (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

“While it was not an easy decision, I could not in good conscience vote for the COVID-19 ‘relief’ bill that was put before us today. While AB 1038 does include some important and helpful measures, they amount to little more than scraps for the thousands of Wisconsinites who have already been forced to wait while Republicans dragged their feet on providing relief to our citizens. Working people in Wisconsin had to wait over a month for any relief from the Legislature, and this Republican masterclass in tepid half-measures is all they get? Where is the needed funding for our healthcare systems and frontline workers? Where is the mortgage and rent abatement? Where are the provisions to make sure that all COVID-19 treatment is affordable? Where is the help for childcare providers? Where is the expanded food assistance for families that have lost income? Where are the measures to protect vulnerable inmates in our prison system, who are unable to practice safe social distancing? Where is the support for small businesses blindsided by this crisis? Where is the aid for nursing homes and long-term care facilities? Where are the provisions to make sure the rest of this year’s elections can be conducted safely? And again, I ask, where is the substantive relief for our working families?” Brostoff continued, “If we’ve only got one shot, we have to get this right.”

Rep. Cabrera added, “Healthcare, frontline, and ALL other essential workers deserve to be provided with proper personal protection equipment, fully paid sick time, hazard pay, and full healthcare coverage for risking their lives and that of their families in order to keep the rest of us safe. Furthermore, we cannot ask the working families of Wisconsin to stay home and not provide them with; first, the economic security to be able to pay for food, shelter, and other basic living expenses; and secondly, full healthcare coverage for testing and treatment related to COVID-19. I believe this is the bare minimum Wisconsinites expected from us today. Unfortunately, this and so much more is missing from this bill without justification.”

Earlier today, the Wisconsin State Assembly convened virtually to debate and vote on Assembly Bill 1038, a bill to provide state-level assistance to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis. While the bill has been cast by Republicans as a “compromise” measure between themselves, the Governor’s office, and legislative Democrats, the few positive reforms that the bill proposes will only be temporary, and many of the needed, substantive proposals put forth by legislative Democrats were left out of the final bill entirely. Moreover, Republicans used the mammoth omnibus bill and the cover of the COVID-19 pandemic to reintroduce a previously-failed measure to cut training hours for certified nursing assistants (CNAs), thereby putting vulnerable Wisconsinites in harm’s way both during and long after the COVID-19 crisis passes.

Brostoff concluded, “Republicans have indicated that this bill presents the upper limit of what measures they are willing to consider to help Wisconsin’s families. And on top of that, they decided to use this crisis to sneak in one last-ditch partisan attack on consumer protections and our CNAs. If Republicans truly believe that half-measures and political games are what Wisconsinites deserve during an unprecedented crisis, I absolutely refuse to cosign that sentiment. AB 1038 is a pig with lipstick, and it doesn’t deserve to win any beauty contests.”

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