



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## **Small Businesses Make Our Communities Thrive**

*By State Representative Don Vruwink*

Like everyone, the “Safer at Home” order has changed my daily routine. I find myself missing my monthly breakfast in Whitewater with community leaders and visiting with students at UW-Whitewater.

I miss substitute teaching in Oregon, interacting with students and staff, and umpiring ball games.

I miss going to the stores, shops, banks, and law offices in my Assembly District and chatting with whoever is there. I miss my Albion Tiger friends in Edgerton. I really miss just being able to walk into small businesses which are now closed.

Small businesses truly are the heart of our communities. They need our support now more than ever. Our local businesses support us and our community in many ways by sponsoring sports teams, holding community events, donating to charities, providing scholarships, and serving as gathering places.

I am fortunate to call small business owners my friends, and it is a privilege being their voice in the Legislature. Many business owners have told me of their experience with the Safer at Home order. I know businesses are struggling and are trying to ride out the coronavirus storm the best they can. The economic loss will take a long time to recover from on an individual level, as well as state and national.

As much as I would like to, I cannot visit with business owners in person right now. However, I make sure to personally get in touch with everyone who contacts my office to share their thoughts, feelings and frustrations.

I want to hear from you about your experience so I can provide a balanced voice when I communicate with the Governor and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I give credit to those I have spoken to because people are doing their best to stay positive while balancing public health and their checkbook through these unprecedented times.

As we continue to flatten the curve and work toward returning to economic and social normalcy, I encourage everyone to continue to support local businesses as best you can. Your support does not have to be strictly financial. Recommending a business to people you know, writing a positive review online, liking social media posts, posting pictures, and giving moral support are things we all can do to help small businesses.

My wife Beth and I make it a point to order take-out at the restaurants that remain open for take-out. We also buy gift certificates that are redeemable when the businesses re-open.

Small business owners are our friends and neighbors. They make our communities survive and thrive. Despite the challenges and uncertainty we all face, I am certain we can and will turn things around. It will take patience and persistence. But things will get better. I am happy to hear your questions, concerns and comments.

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*State Rep. Don Vruwink represents parts of Rock, Walworth, Jefferson, and Dane counties, which include the communities of Whitewater, Milton, Edgerton, Footville, part of the Village of Oregon, and 15 surrounding townships. He can be reached at 608-266-3790, [Rep.Vruwink@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Rep.Vruwink@legis.wisconsin.gov), and P.O. Box 8953, Madison WI 53708.*