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# TYLER VORPAGEL

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 27<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## **Evers' Badger Bounce Back Plan Doesn't Add Up**

This week the Governor unveiled his Badger Bounce Back Plan in an effort to re-open Wisconsin and get our economy back to work. This came 3 days after he announced that he would be extending Safer at Home until May 26th. The announcement of the extension came 2 days after the Legislature passed with broad bi-partisan support legislation to help Wisconsin handle the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before I delve into the Governor's plan to re-open the economy I want to thank everyone in our community for especially to those in Public Health, our health care workers, first responders, and everyone for doing what they can to stay safe and keeping our cases relatively low. This week the Governor, finally, put out some clear guidelines as to what he is looking for that would end "Safer at Home." These are answers to questions the legislature has been asking for since he implemented "Safer at Home" last month. My constituents have asked for dates and more concrete answers. They want to know when they can re-open their small businesses, when they can reschedule their yearly eye exams, when they can take their kids to the playground, and when they can celebrate important occasions with their family.

Earlier this week the Legislature filed a lawsuit in the Wisconsin Supreme Court challenging the Governor's extension of the "Safer at Home" order through May 26th. After the announcement of extension last Friday we heard from hundreds of constituents with frustrations at the extension. People were upset that we had stayed home to flatten the curve for a month, and that we should be able to start to turn the dial back to normal. Whether you agree or disagree, his decision goes beyond the executive branch's statutory powers. Many of you felt like you had no say in the process especially given that other states with more confirmed cases have set firm dates to begin re-opening while we have a plan with 3 phases that include moving targets. The Governor keeps saying he's using science to make these decisions, but every state around us is ending their Safer at Home 23+ days before Wisconsin, even though states with more cases will be opening sooner.

He spoke at great lengths of how he mirrored his plan on President Trump's guidelines *Opening up America Again*. However, Governor Evers' plan is extremely strict with specific goals of decreasing cases for 14 days straight, 85,000 tests per week, hiring 1,000 individuals for contact tracing, and implementing a program to isolate or quarantine everyone who has been exposed or infected. These are lofty goals, and while it's nice to see him attach a number to his plan, they're a tad un-reliable since to date since we started testing for COVID-19 in Wisconsin we have only tested 47,000 people. The goal of 85,000 tests per week will take months before our labs have this capacity. Decreasing cases for 14 days will also be unreliable, as more testing comes on line, and more people are tested for the virus that number will continue to rise. Many hospitals are lacking in swabs and other testing supplies, and even at that our numbers aren't drastically going up or down, they seem to be leveling off.



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Both the Governor and the President introduced Three Phases for re-opening, but they are vastly different. The President laid out multiple areas of guidance for individuals, businesses, hospitals, and travel. In stark difference the Governor took a one size fits all and only looked at numbers to re-open. Both plans address gatherings by individuals, restaurants, k-12 schools, childcare settings, bars and colleges; however the president lays out who should continue to shelter in place, travel plans, returning to work and telecommuting, senior living facilities, hospitals, large venues, elective surgeries, non-essential businesses, and gyms.

Earlier this week, in a survey of Wisconsin businesses done by WEDC, 35% of respondents said their business could close permanently if the “safer at home” orders lasts three months. I agree with the Governor that re-opening our economy will not be like flipping a switch, but in order to turn that dial we have to start doing that now. We need to be realistic with our goals, and encourage our local businesses to be innovative and re-open while maintaining social distancing practices as we ease back into normal.