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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 9, 2020

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Public Hearing is Necessary before Striking down COVID Strategy

(MADISON)—Today, Senator Tim Carpenter issued the following statement regarding the announcement of an executive session, but no public hearing, in the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules.

“Late yesterday, the co-chairs of the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR) scheduled an executive session on Governor Tony Evers’ emergency order limiting public gatherings. Unfortunately, JCRAR won’t even bother holding a public hearing on the Governor’s order before they vote on this important life saving measure.

“It is extremely short sighted to not hear and consider public input from the many individuals and groups that would be directly affected by the Republican’s rush to strike down public health strategy. The Legislature must hear from our front line workers, nurses, doctors, hospitals, local public health departments, businesses, and manufacturers of personal protective equipment.

“Sadly, the Republicans will repeal the emergency rule along party lines and not bother to replace it with any alternative public health strategy to combat the Coronavirus pandemic. It’s a knee jerk reaction from Republicans to repeal Governor Evers’ public health measures even though the majority of Wisconsinites approve of the governor’s handling of Coronavirus.

“The Do-Nothing Republican State Legislature hasn’t met for over 175 days to pass, or even consider legislation to combat COVID-19, help unemployed workers, or help businesses recover from the economic crisis of the pandemic. They have left these responsibilities to the governor. Now, the best action that they conceive is to create roadblocks for Governor Evers and the Department of Health Services.

“Yesterday afternoon we also learned that Wisconsin continues to break its records for new cases and hospitalizations. Hospitals in Green Bay and the Fox Valley are on the verge of a crisis.

“All 132 state legislators have a responsibility to address this crisis, Republicans should not concentrate the enormity of this decision in just a few hands.

“It is time to put people before politics when addressing the Coronavirus pandemic. We should not be rejecting the strategy of the health experts of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services without a public hearing and input from health care professionals, associations, and businesses.

“As case numbers and hospitalizations hit record highs, the Legislature should avoid rash decisions motivated by the pursuit of power. People’s lives, health, and livelihoods are too important to jeopardize in political games.”

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