



# CHRIS LARSON

## STATE SENATOR

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Freedom to harm: GOP attempts to make selfishness a protected class**

**Madison, WI** - Refusing to put state dollars toward any of our most pressing concerns, Senate Republicans chose instead to use Tuesday's session to make selfishness a protected class. By passing 6 bills giving special treatment to those who refuse COVID-19 vaccination, they sent a strong signal that refusing to follow the science and protect your neighbors is not only acceptable, but can earn you special benefits not available to other citizens.

At a time when Republicans seem hell-bent on shredding the safety net, they're giving a VIP pass to unemployment benefits for people who refuse to follow their employer's vaccine mandate.

With entertainment venues finally starting to bounce back thanks in part to their forward-thinking COVID policies, including vaccination or negative test requirements, Republicans want to jeopardize their recovery by forbidding these precautions.

They even want to hold employers liable for any negative side effects of COVID vaccines, even after granting those same employers immunity from liability for COVID exposure in the workplace.

Nearly two-thirds of Wisconsinites have done the responsible thing and have been fully vaccinated. Those who are not vaccinated are 3 times more likely to be infected, 10 times more likely to be hospitalized, and 14 times more likely to die of COVID-19 than those who are. We should be rewarding those who've done the right thing, not catering to the fringe who refuse.

State government has a substantial role to play in protecting our neighbors from harm, but Senate Republicans would rather make selfishness a protected class, knowing full well these bills will never become law, in an effort to appeal to the extremist wing of their base as they prepare to campaign for re-election this fall.

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