



February 8, 2021

Governor Tony Evers
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, WI 53707
DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY

Dear Governor Evers,

As a past co-chair of the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules, I have strong regard for the structural process of creating the laws, rules and guidance documents that dictate how we govern this great state. In the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I am disheartened it seems these procedures have continued to be ignored.

I believe we are stronger and more successful when we work together. I appreciated the conversations my office had with the Department of Health Services early on in the pandemic when I was still co-chair. However, I, along with many of my colleagues as evidenced by our vote rescinding your emergency order, are alarmed by the unilateral actions your office has chosen to take.

When the COVID-19 pandemic first began, it was important Wisconsin was able to react and respond quickly. The effects of the virus were relatively unknown, and we needed to make sure we were prepared; that is what state of emergencies are for. However almost a year later, the pandemic has now become an unavoidable part of our everyday lives.

The statutes relating to declaring a state of emergency were structured with this type of situation in mind. It encourages both branches to work together to come up with a long-term solution. Now, well beyond the statutory 60-days where you would need legislative input to extend your order, crafting a long-term solution with the legislature is the avenue I am appealing you to pursue. The legislative or administrative rule process is more than capable of addressing the ongoing needs of the pandemic. Constituents already know they should follow CDC guidelines in order to keep themselves safe. Our focus should now be on more immediate issues such as making sure our students get back into the classrooms, supporting our local small businesses and creating a clear and comprehensive public vaccination plan.

I know it may seem easier to not work with the legislature and do what you think is best, but what are laws if we do not follow them?

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joan Ballweg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "B".

Sen. Joan Ballweg