



## ROBERT W. WIRCH

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

October 9, 2020

### MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

first full week of October



Dear friend,

The first full week of October is recognized as Mental Illness Awareness Week. One in five American adults experience some form of mental illness, but many going through it feel all alone. This week is a time of education and community, and I felt it was important to acknowledge. This is a difficult time for many businesses, particularly small businesses. In an effort to lift them up and provide a bit of good news, I'll begin highlighting a local business in my newsletter each week. This week, the spotlight is on Blue House Books in Kenosha. Covid-19 continues to dominate the headlines and our way of life, as hospitals all across the state are stretched thin, Governor Evers takes new steps to control the spread, and conservatives seek to throw out the mask order. Finally, Downtown Kenosha, Inc. and Governor Evers are providing new funding opportunities; DKI will be distributing grants to businesses damaged in the August unrest, and the Governor is helping small businesses and renters hurt by Covid. Stay safe, everyone. Please, wear a mask, keep your distance, and wash your hands.

Sincerely,

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## In Case You Missed It

# small business SPOTLIGHT

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## *Blue House Books Finds Permanent Home in Downtown Kenosha*



Previously a pop-up bookstore, independent bookseller Blue House Books has opened a permanent location in downtown Kenosha, at 5615 7th St. Owner Samantha Jacquest worked hard renovating the new space and hosted “Grand Re-opening” on September 19. The folks at Blue House Books pride themselves on their top-quality inventory and are experts at making recommendations. There is nothing like walking into a bookstore and being surrounded by a wealth of ideas, entertainment, adventures and knowledge. Check out Blue House Books downtown or visit their website, <https://www.blue-house-books.com/> or Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/BHBKenosha/>.



## *Increased Covid Testing Options*

While the state Department of Health Services cites “High Covid Activity” in **all 72 counties**, there are currently an increased number of options locally for anyone looking to get tested. Your primary health care provider is always an option, but there are many community testing sites available, as well.

**National Guard Drive-through testing:** The Wisconsin National Guard will be conducting free, drive-through testing from 10 am to 6 pm each Monday from October 12 - Dec. 7 at both the Kenosha County Job Center, 8600 Sheridan Rd, Kenosha, and the Kenosha County Center at Highways 45 and 50 in Bristol (no testing at Bristol site on Nov. 27). No appointments are necessary, and symptoms are not required in order to get tested. Testing is open to any person who lives or works in Wisconsin and is age 5 or above. Online pre-registration is recommended at <https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov>.



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**Advocate Aurora:** Drive-thru testing at both the Kenosha and Burlington locations for community members exhibiting at least one symptom of Covid-19; advance registration is required at [aah.org/testing](http://aah.org/testing) or by phone at 877-819-5034

**CVS Pharmacy:** Drive-through testing available at CVS in Kenosha (3710 57th Ave.) and Racine (3915 Durand Ave.); advance registration required at <https://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing>

**Froedert South:** Drive-through testing is available to those who qualify after completing an initial phone evaluation at (262)671-7777 between 8 am and 4:30 pm Monday-Friday

**Kenosha Community Medical Center/Gateway Kenosha Campus:** A drive-through testing site is open to those who complete a quick registration process at (262)925-1325

**Ascension:** Offering testing by appointment, (833)981-0711 or [choose.ascension.org/onlinecare](http://choose.ascension.org/onlinecare)

To find other testing sites in the state, visit

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/community-testing.htm>.



### ***Covid Cases, Deaths, Hospitalizations Continue to Surge; Judge Hears GOP Challenge to Mask Order; Public Gathering Limits Attempt to Mitigate Growing Crisis***

Another week, another troubling update on the Covid-19 front. Hospital systems all over the state are at or nearing crisis levels, as Covid-related hospitalizations have exploded over the last couple of weeks. While public health and infectious disease specialists worldwide agree that wearing masks is one of the most significant tools we have in slowing the spread, the conservative Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, with the backing of Republicans in the State Legislature, continued their court

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challenge seeking to end Governor Evers's mask order. A judge in northern Wisconsin heard arguments in the case earlier this week and is expected to rule fairly quickly. During the hearing, the judge seemed somewhat skeptical of the need for judicial action when the Republican majorities in the Assembly and Senate have the power to end the mask order through legislative action. Additionally, this week, Governor Evers announced new statewide requirements, limiting public gatherings at places like bars and restaurants to 25% of capacity. The order is currently effective for two "incubation cycles", which are about 14 days each, with an end date of November 6. You can read more about the order at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02792.pdf>.



### ***Downtown Kenosha, Inc. Launches One Town Small Business Recovery Grant Program***

With many businesses still trying to rebuild and recover following the unrest of late August, Downtown Kenosha, Inc. is offering assistance with the launch of their **One Town Recovery Grants**. According to DKI, the goal of the program is "to stabilize local businesses and repair damages utilizing the funds raised by Downtown Kenosha, Inc. following the unrest." Through the program, DKI is offering a one-time grant to businesses that were affected; grants awards can range from \$1,000-\$10,000 each.

Part of the application process includes sharing the story of your business, in as much detail as possible. The wonderful team at Downtown Kenosha has made themselves available to help with the application process. The application period runs from October 5 through October 12. Visit <https://www.downtownkenosha.org/onetown-recovery-grant/> for more information.



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## ***Governor Evers Puts More Money into Small Business, Rental Assistance Grant Programs***

Earlier this week, Governor Tony Evers announced another allocation of Wisconsin's CARES Act funds. In all, another \$109 million will be directed to small businesses hurt by the Covid-19 pandemic, including \$50 million for the "We're All In" grant program. Additionally, the Governor has committed another \$10 million to the Wisconsin Rental Assistance Program, which provides grants to renters struggling due to the Covid pandemic. Besides "We're All In" and the WRAP grant program, the Governor announced the creation of several new grants to assist businesses in the entertainment and tourism sectors hurt by Covid. People interested in the WRAP rental assistance grant should apply through the Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency by calling (262)657-0840 in Kenosha or (262)637-8377 in Racine. More information on all of the grants is available at <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIGOV/bulletins/2a44989> and <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIGOV/bulletins/2a4759f>.



## ***Wispolitics.com Review Calls Wisconsin's GOP-Led Legislature the Least Active in the Country***

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As the Covid-19 pandemic has ravaged states throughout the country, and with calls for police reform escalating, most state Legislatures have been hard at work over the last several months. That's not the case here in Wisconsin, where the Republican-controlled Senate and Assembly haven't met a single time since April. In fact, Wispolitics.com, a strictly non-partisan website covering Wisconsin's political scene, has declared Wisconsin's Legislature the least-active full-time state legislature in the country. A review by Wispolitics staff found that the other states with full-time legislatures met on average 18 times more frequently than Wisconsin's since March 12, when Gov. Evers first declared a public health emergency. While the regular legislative session ended abruptly due to the outbreak in the spring with much work left undone, Republican leaders have the ability to convene extraordinary sessions to act on important issues at any time, and they even refused to meet when called into special session on police reform by Governor Evers. Even more disgraceful, in Wisconsin's two neighbors with legislatures considered "part time", Iowa and Minnesota, lawmakers met on the floor 17 and 62 times, respectively, since that March 12 date. Advocacy groups from across the political spectrum, as well as Democratic legislators, have been calling for an extraordinary session to deal with a host of issues, from Covid-19 to police reform, the counting of absentee ballots, and more. I have joined with a number of my Democratic colleagues in sending letters to both Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) and Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester), urging them to let us come back to do the work of the people. You can read more about Wisconsin's Republican Do-Nothing Legislature at <https://www.wispolitics.com/2020/review-finds-wisconsin-has-least-active-full-time-legislature-in-nation-since-pandemic/>.



# SERVE WISCONSIN

## ***AmeriCorps Wisconsin Seeking Grant Program Applications***

Serve Wisconsin is now accepting grant applications for new and recompetiting Wisconsin AmeriCorps programs to start in the fall of 2021. Selected organizations will receive grants to manage AmeriCorps programs in order to engage AmeriCorps members in service to meet critical needs in Wisconsin.

Non-profit organizations, state and local units of government, institutions of higher education, faith-based organizations and Indian Tribes looking to address a community need are encouraged to submit a proposal. Notification of Intent to Apply is due October 26, 2020, at midnight; proposals and additional documents are due November 9, 2020, at 4:30 pm.

To read more and to obtain a Request for Proposals (RFP) document, visit

<https://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov/start-a-program>.