



ROBERT W. WIRCH

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

January 8, 2021



Dear friend,

Welcome to my first e-newsletter of 2021. Not only are we in a new year, but earlier this week, the new legislative session began, as well. The first order of business should be Covid relief legislation, and there are several competing proposals being considered. We are also in a budget year, which generally means that most major pieces of legislation, especially those requiring an appropriation, are on hold until after the budget is passed. At the federal level, we all witnessed the sad, outrageous events that took place at our national Capitol earlier this week. Violence in any form must be condemned. Finally, Covid is still present and dangerous. Local testing options are still available. With vaccinations on the horizon, now is not the time to let up. Stay home, keep your distance, and wear a mask. Stay safe and stay healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Bob'.

In Case You Missed It

State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882 • (608) 267-8979

Toll-Free Office Hotline: 1-888-769-4724

Email: Sen.Wirch@legis.state.wi.us • Website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen22/news> • Fax: (608) 267-0984
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small business **SPOTLIGHT**



The Maple Table in Racine Serves Up Farm-to-Table Goodness



After working in the restaurant industry virtually their entire lives, Tony and Tamara LoPiparo made their dream a reality in 2019 when they opened The Maple Table, 520 Main St. in Racine. Serving brunch fare using locally sourced ingredients, The Maple Table became an instant local favorite. Operating a breakfast and lunch place (The Maple Table serves between 8 am and 2 pm everyday) allows the LoPiparos flexibility to spend time with their two young daughters. The Maple Table is also environmentally-conscious, using paper straws, compostable takeout containers, and wooden stir sticks. While you can't go wrong with anything on the menu, the shrimp and grits are a favorite amongst my staff. Learn more and see the full menu at <https://www.themapletable.com/>.





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Competing Covid Proposals Take Center Stage at State Capitol as Wisconsin Reaches Grim Milestone

With the State Legislature back in action, and Wisconsin sadly passing 5,000 Covid deaths, the focus is on passing Covid relief legislation. What exactly that legislation will look like is still up in the air. In November, Governor Evers released a sweeping Covid proposal which would, among other things: appropriate funding for continued contact tracing, testing and other Covid activities; extend the waiver of the one-week unemployment benefit waiting period; allow DHS to prohibit foreclosures and evictions through the end of 2021; prohibit insurers from requiring cost-sharing for Covid testing, treatments and vaccinations; and allow critical workers, such as healthcare providers and law enforcement, to claim workers comp benefits related to Covid-19. After multiple discussions with Republican leaders in the Legislature, the Governor offered a scaled-back proposal, containing a handful of items on which they had all agreed during their talks. Assembly Republicans, led by Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester), have released a proposal of their own, focusing on liability for big businesses; forcing state employees back to their offices and teachers back to classrooms; and handcuffing state and local health officials when it comes to restrictions meant to slow the spread of Covid. Finally, the Assembly Democrats Covid package incorporates most of the Governor's original proposal and adds in hazard and sick pay for healthcare workers and full acceptance of the federal Medicaid expansion. Assembly Republicans have wasted no time, holding a committee hearing and executive session on their bill on the second day of the session, with very little public notice, followed by a floor vote in the Assembly on Thursday. The Governor has said he will likely veto that bill if it passes both houses. You can find more about the competing proposals at legis.wisconsin.gov and <https://wisconsinexaminer.com/brief/evers-drafts-compromise-bill-on-covid-19-urges-gop-leaders-to-act/>, https://www.apg-wi.com/news/state/gop-fast-tracking-covid-19-relief-measures-gov-tony-evers-holds-veto-power/article_252ea932-0add-5a0d-9c4d-045500135c26.html, and https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/republicans-covid-19-package-largely-ditches-compromise-offered-by-governor/article_7c379f45-649c-5a41-ae85-3e282ce1bc81.html.



Local Covid Testing Options

There are a 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.

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: A drive-through testing site at the former Chase Bank, 5506 Seventh Ave., is open to patients who complete a quick registration process at <https://www.kenoshachc.org/covid-19-resource-center/>. Testing is conducted Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 am to 4 pm.

Old Kenosha Fire Station No. 3: Free, drive-through testing will be offered during the following hours at the former No. 3 Fire Station, 2121 Roosevelt Rd., Kenosha: Tuesdays, 2-6 pm; Thursdays, 2-6 pm; Saturdays, 9 am - 1 pm. This testing is being offered in a partnership between locally-owned Modern Apothecary, the Wisconsin DHS, and the Kenosha Fire Department. An appointment and preregistration is strongly encouraged, with appointment times available at <https://modernapothecary.10to8.com> and registration available at <https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov>. Anyone who lives or works in Wisconsin, ages 5 and over, can be tested.

Festival Hall in Racine: Each Thursday, January 7 - March 4, from 9 am to 5 pm, at Festival Hall, 5 Fifth St., Racine. Preregistration at <https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov> is encouraged.

To find other testing sites in the state, visit

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

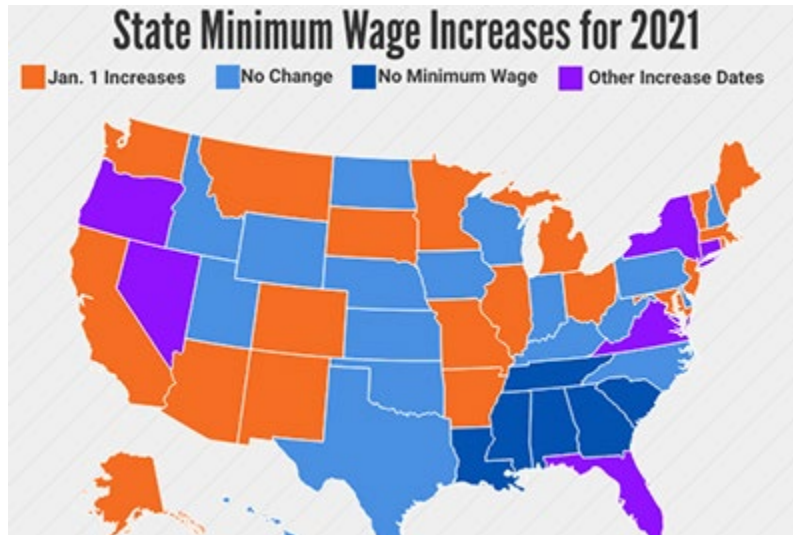
UW System schools statewide, including Parkside, have been provided with a limited number of rapid-result Covid-19 tests. These tests provide results in 15-30 minutes. The tests are free of charge and available to the public, and you don't have to have symptoms to get a test. A positive rapid test will need to be confirmed with the regular Covid-19 test but will provide you some guidance on whether or not you need to quarantine during that period. Registration at <https://www.doineedacovid19test.com> is required. The tests are administered in De Simone Gym in the SAC on the Parkside campus Monday-Thursday, 9 am - 5 pm, and Friday, 9 am - 1 pm. Testing is expected to last at least several weeks.

<https://www.uwp.edu/explore/news/surge-testing.cfm>



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Twenty States Raise Minimum Wage to Start 2021; Wisconsin is Not One of Them

In what has become a recurring theme every January, a number of states saw minimum wage increases on January 1, and Wisconsin continues to fall farther and farther behind. As a result of previously-passed legislation or statewide referenda, workers in twenty states implemented higher minimum wages to start 2021, with another five seeing increases at varying points this year. These states, both red and blue states, include our neighbors Illinois, Minnesota and Michigan. Workers in Wisconsin, meanwhile, are still stuck with the current federal minimum, a paltry \$7.25 per hour, where it has been since 2009. I have authored or co-sponsored legislation to increase the state minimum wage each session since then, with Republicans in control of the Legislature blocking these attempts each time. Governor Evers included a minimum wage increase in his first state budget proposal, and that, too, was blocked by the Republican majority. The fight for Wisconsin's working families continues, but with a new President headed to the White House who supports a higher minimum wage, and pro-minimum wage increase majorities soon to control the U.S. Senate and House, our best hope looks like action at the federal level.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/every-state-raising-its-minimum-wage-in-2021-15-2021-1#arizonas-minimum-wage-also-increased-annually-for-inflation-going-from-12-to-1215-2>

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Congress Affirms Pres.-Elect Biden's Victory After Violent Coup Attempt by Dangerous Mob Fails

In a day that none of us will ever forget or want to relive, the U.S. House and Senate chambers were evacuated during session, the Capitol building was put on lockdown, and four people died after a large group seeking to stop the certification of Electoral College votes stormed the Capitol, smashing windows, entering Congressional offices, vandalizing and looting the heart of our very democracy on a day that should have witnessed our peaceful transition of power. It was a dark, disturbing sight, one that we expect to see on the news coming from some far-flung banana republic, not in our country, often called the “world’s oldest democracy”. Thankfully, the coup attempt did not stop the actions of Congress, as both houses reconvened and worked late into the night, certifying the Electoral College votes from each state until Pres.-Elect Joe Biden reached 306 votes, and his victory was affirmed. Democracy won the day, but it is a sign that it’s fragile, and we will need to continually protect it.



\$600 Federal Stimulus Checks Hitting Bank Accounts and Mailboxes

By now, many of you have received your second round of federal stimulus funds, \$600 per person, \$1,200 per married couple, depending on income. For those of you that haven't, your money should be on its way. The legislation authorizing the payments stipulates that they must be sent out by January 15. You will receive this stimulus payment the same way you received the first. If you are having problems or questions with your stimulus, you should contact our U.S. Congressman, Bryan Steil, at (262)654-1901 (in Kenosha) or (262)637-0510 (in Racine).



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