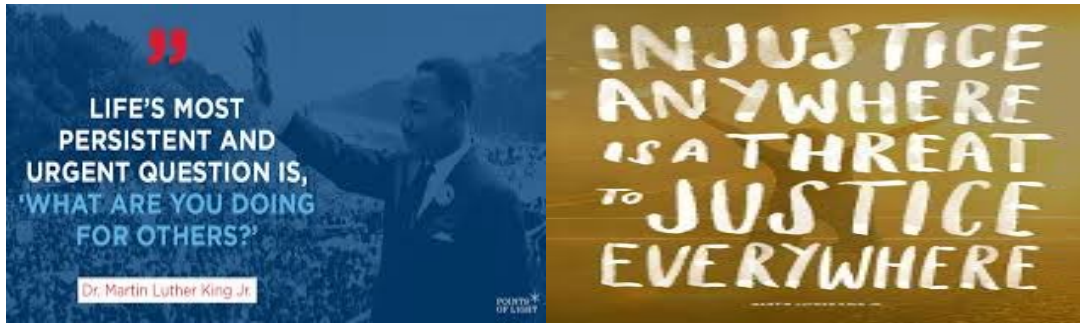




ROBERT W. WIRCH

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

January 15, 2021



Dear friend,

What a week. Between the continued fallout from the U.S. Capitol insurrection, the impeachment proceedings, the Governor's State of the State address, and a flurry of legislative activity on Covid response legislation, there has been a lot to keep up with. Below you'll find updates on both the Governor's speech and the current status of state legislation to address Covid-19. Monday, January 18, 2021, will be recognized as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Dr. King's impact and legacy is still felt today, and his messages on racial justice and equality, as well as workers' rights and service to others, are as important and relevant as ever. Below you'll find details on local MLK Day observances. Finally, the new, more contagious variant of Covid-19 that was detected in the United Kingdom a few weeks back has now been found in Wisconsin. So far, the mutated version isn't known to be more deadly, however. As always, wear a mask, continue distancing, and stay at home. I hope you all stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

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

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In Case You Missed It

small business **SPOTLIGHT**



SapSap Laotian Pop-up Set to Open Permanent Space



Since 2016, Alex Hanesakda has been offering Laotian food locally through “pop-up” locations.

Through word of mouth, the cuisine grew in popularity to the point where it was regularly running out of many of its more popular dishes. Beginning in March, that will no longer be a problem, as Hanesakda and SapSap open up a permanent location at 2343 Mead St., the former site of local legend Toteroto's. In addition to the new location, Hanesakda is starting a beer company, Thum Phuk, which will release its first product later this month, a sticky rice lager.

The company's beers will be served at the Mead St. location, as well as other local establishments. Exciting around the announcement was so great that Hanesakda got a mention on the Facebook page for the U.S. Embassy in Laos. For now, you can get SapSap food at the Branch at 1501, and customers can order for pickup at <https://www.sapsapeats.com/>.



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Big Plans for Local MLK Day Celebrations

As usual, Kenosha and Racine have big things on tap to commemorate 2021's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, with some expected tweaks in this age of Covid. In Kenosha, the big event is Gateway Technical College's 27th annual celebration. Held Monday, January 18, from noon to 1 pm, the event aims to honor Dr. King's legacy and community members who keep his message alive through community service; this year's honorees are Gregory Bennett, Jr. and the organization Seeds of Hope. The event's keynote speaker will be Dr. Tammi Summers, PhD, vice president of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Gateway. Check <https://www.gtc.edu/business-community/additional-information/community-events/dr-martin-luther-king-jr-celebration> for a link to the virtual event. Carthage College will also be recognizing the day with a series of community conversations and discussions. Beginning with a kickoff event from 1:30 to 2:30 pm (<https://www.carthage.edu/equity-inclusion/mlk-day/>) on January 18, the Carthage community will take part in the Red Bracelet Project, symbolizing the fight for justice, with events through March.

The Coalition for Dismantling Racism, based in Kenosha, will be hosting a series of events as part of "Kindness Week", with the theme "Counting on Kindness in 2021". A full listing of events can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/KenoshaCFDR>.

Racine, meanwhile, will begin its celebration early, at noon on Friday, January 15, with an event featuring guest speaker Rev. Al Sharpton. Lisa Parham, organizer of the yearly event, has put together a strong lineup of speakers, also featuring Racine Mayor Cory Mason; Racine County Executive Jonathan Delagrave; Racine Police Chief Art Howell; Gateway Technical College President Dr. Bryan Albrecht; Racine native, former NBA star, and philanthropist Caron Butler; and local faith leaders. The theme of this year's event is "A Reawakening of Dr. Martin Luther King, and the presentation can be viewed by registering at https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EiAfZAeOQXm4UV6YjtdOCA or through the City of Racine Facebook page.

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In Virtual State of the State Address, Governor Evers Acknowledges Challenges, Expresses Optimism for the Future; Calls for Redistricting Reform, Fix to Broken Unemployment Insurance System

It was a far cry from what we are used to. There was no pomp and circumstance; no cheering (or jeering); no special guests up in the gallery. The 2021 version of the State of the State address, the first given since we've been in full-blown pandemic mode, featured just Governor Evers, standing before the state and American flag, speaking to the people of Wisconsin. While reflecting on the challenges of the last year, the Governor also presented an optimistic tone, noting that Wisconsinites can overcome anything when we work together. Among the major policy points in the Governor's speech, he reiterated the need for nonpartisan redistricting reform; called for a special session to address longstanding problems with the state UI system; and announced a plan to invest \$200 million in broadband improvements. You can watch the full speech at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngEVaO3JWYE>.



DHS Begins Weekly Newsletter to Update on Vaccine Progress; Kenosha County Launches Vaccine Registration Site

The state Department of Health Services is now offering a weekly newsletter that will provide the public with direct information about the Covid-19 response and vaccine rollout. The electronic newsletter will be sent out every Friday to people who sign up for it. Registration is now open at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDHS/subscriber/new?topic_id=WIDHS_578.



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In other vaccine news, a new online form is up and running for individuals and organizations in Kenosha County (currently those in tiers 1a and 1b of the Covid vaccination schedule only) to sign up and be alerted when they are up to get the vaccine and how they can connect with a vaccine provider.

Currently only tier 1a is receiving the vaccine. The registration form is available at <http://bit.ly/KCTier1a1b>.



Legislature's Republican Majority Can't Agree on Covid Response Bill, so Nothing Gets Done for Now

A week ago, the Assembly had passed a Republican Covid bill that shielded negligent businesses from liability for illness and damages resulting from Covid exposure; forced teachers back into classrooms and made it more difficult for school districts to go virtual; and stripped state and local public health officials of their ability to impose restriction and limits on gatherings to slow the spread of Covid. The bill did virtually nothing to relieve the physical and economic pain that Wisconsin families and small businesses are dealing with. Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (R-Oostburg) announced that the Senate would be meeting to debate and vote on the bill within days. How quickly things change.

Senate Republicans made sweeping changes to the bill, maintaining the liability exemptions but stripping most other negative provisions while extending the waiver of the one-week unemployment benefit waiting period and allowing the state to draw down more federal money. This version of the bill passed the Senate. As the two versions aren't identical, the Governor couldn't sign the bill into law, even if he wanted to. The Assembly would have to come back in session and pass the Senate version of the bill, something Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) and other Assembly Republican leaders have indicated isn't likely. After nine months of inaction, it seemed as if the Republicans were finally ready to do something - anything - to address Covid. Now, the wait continues.

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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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Kenosha Hometown Heroes Commission Seeking Nominees

The City of Kenosha's Hometown Heroes Commission is asking for nominations for the first quarter of 2021. In order to qualify, a person must have been born in, currently live in, or have previously lived for 10 years or more in the City of Kenosha, and have served or is currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. A person can submit only one nomination per quarter. The Commission will review nominations, based on military service; community service; and other accomplishments. One Hometown Hero is chosen per quarter and receives a congratulatory certificate from the mayor, as well as consideration for the Hometown Hero of the Year award. Nomination forms are available on the city website at www.kenosha.org or by calling (262)653-4000 and are due by Feb. 28.



Questions About Your \$600 Stimulus?

For those of you that haven't yet received your second round of federal stimulus, your money should be on its way. 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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