



## ROBERT W. WIRCH

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

February 5, 2021



Dear friend,

This week has been another reminder that it is still winter here in Wisconsin. I hope you are all staying warm in these frigid temperatures. Every year, the first Friday of February is recognized as “National Wear Red Day” to bring awareness to heart disease. Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in the country and is particularly common in women. To learn more about heart disease and National Wear Red Day, visit <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/education-and-awareness/heart-month/wear-red-day>. Below you’ll find the latest updates on state news, as well as details on President Biden’s Covid relief plan, which is moving closer to becoming law. Even though our Covid numbers are trending in the right direction, now is not the time to ease up. Keep those masks on, folks. Stay warm, stay safe and stay healthy.

Sincerely,

*Bob*

## In Case You Missed It

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Email: [Sen.Wirch@legis.state.wi.us](mailto: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**



## *Kenosha Restaurant Week Highlights Diversity of Our Amazing Food Scene*

SAVE THE DATES!  
FEBRUARY  
20 - 28  
2021!

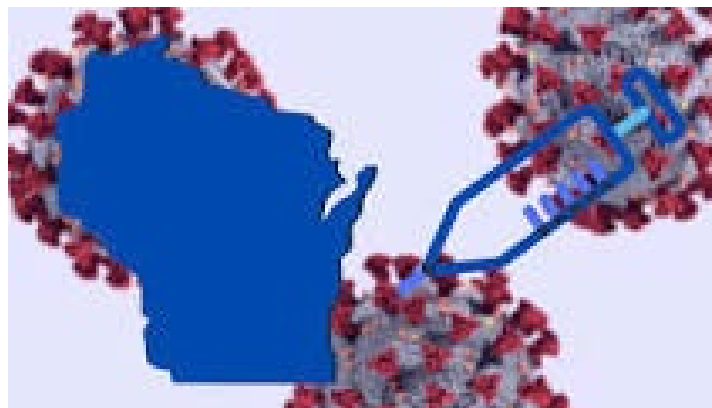
**KENOSHA**  
restaurant week

Kenosha Restaurant Week is once again just around the corner. Fifty local eateries have already signed up to participate this year, and with many small businesses hurting due to the Covid pandemic, it's a better time than ever to revisit an old favorite or try something new.

Covid adaptations will be in place, giving everyone a chance to enjoy a delicious meal (or meals). No prepurchase is required - just stop in to a participating restaurant and ask for the special Restaurant Week menu. This year, each restaurant will be creating their own discounts and specials, with options for dine-in, carry out, curbside pickup, delivery, gift cards and more.

To find out more, including a list of participating restaurants, visit

<https://www.facebook.com/KenoshaRestaurantWeek/>.



## *Covid Vaccine Updates*



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The state hit two big Covid vaccination milestones this week, as more than 100,000 Wisconsinites have now received their complete vaccination series, and more than 600,000 doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the state. We got some additional good news, as Wisconsin's allotment of vaccinations increased by 18% last week, and it was reported that Walgreen's stores in the state will receive 18,000 doses to administer to approved groups.

To find a list of Covid-19 vaccine providers in Kenosha County, visit <http://bit.ly/KCCOVIDHub>. To sign up for email updates on vaccination progress in Racine County, go to <https://crchd.com/covid-19-vaccine>. Finally, you can sign up for the state Department of Health Services' weekly newsletter on vaccine progression at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/newsletter.htm>.

<https://www.wpr.org/wisconsin-surpasses-600k-covid-19-vaccine-doses-administered>

<https://biztimes.com/wisconsin-walgreens-to-begin-in-store-vaccinations-for-eligible-groups-next-week>



### ***Legislature's Republicans Call Extraordinary Session to Eliminate Mask Requirement While Continuing to Ignore Needed Unemployment System Modernization***

In another instance of the Legislature's Republican majority's willingness to put politics ahead of people, Republican leadership called an Extraordinary Session of the Legislature, allowing the Senate to come in for a rare Friday session day, for final passage of legislation meant to keep Wisconsin eligible for federal food assistance after ending the Governor's public health emergency. This comes after a week of back-and-forth, trying to figure out a way to get rid of the mask order while retaining the state's eligibility for \$49 million per month in low-income food assistance. Meanwhile, they continue to ignore the Special Session called by Governor Tony Evers to address the state's outdated,

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50-year-old unemployment insurance (UI) computer system, which has caused weeks or months of delays for thousands and thousands of unemployment claims over the last 11 months.

[http://www.thewheelerreport.com/wheeler\\_docs/files/020421evers.pdf](http://www.thewheelerreport.com/wheeler_docs/files/020421evers.pdf)

<https://www.wpr.org/anticipating-statewide-mask-mandate-repeal-cities-and-counties-craft-local-ordinances>

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/wisconsin/articles/2021-02-03/wisconsin-assembly-sends-mask-order-repeal-back-to-senate>

Just moments after the Republican-controlled Assembly passed the Joint Resolution ending the public health emergency and mask order, Governor Evers showed that he prioritizes public health, issuing a new public health emergency and mask order, effective immediately. Ultimately, this issue will have to be decided by the State Supreme Court.



### ***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. Pre-registration at <https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov> is encouraged.



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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>



## ***Governor to Again Push for Reduced Prescription Drug Prices in State Budget***

In a “sneak peek” of what’s to come in his Feb. 16 budget address, Governor Tony Evers released details of a plan to lower prescription drug prices for state residents. Among actions the plan would direct are: creation of a Prescription Drug Affordability Review Board; authorization for the state to import lower-cost drugs and collaborate with local entities to leverage purchasing power of medications; establishment of a \$50 copay cap on insulin and creation of an Insulin Safety Net Program; creation of a pilot program to develop a value-based formula for diabetes medication; an increase in funding for free and charitable clinics by \$4 million over the biennium; and elimination of BadgerCare prescriptions drug copays. Some of these measures were included in the Governor’s 2019-2021 budget proposal before being pulled by Republicans on the Joint Finance Committee.

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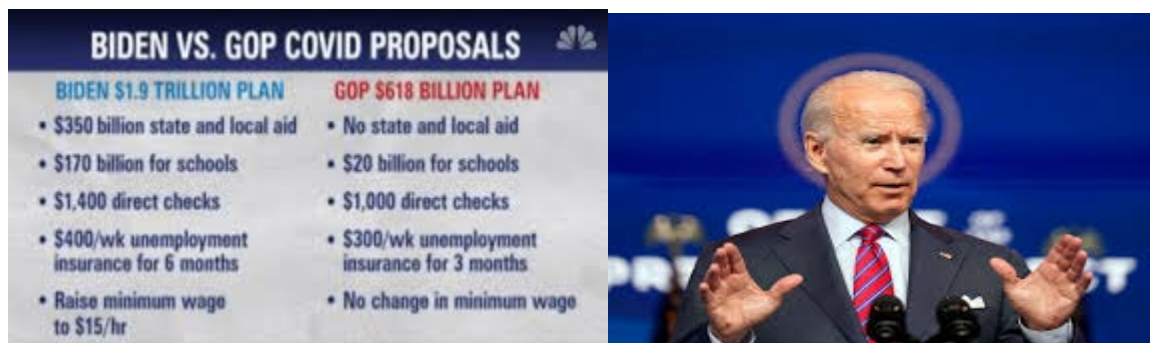




## ***Upcoming People's Maps Commission Hearing to Focus on 1st Congressional District***

People living in the states' 1st Congressional District, which includes Kenosha and Racine Counties, will have a chance to share their thoughts on how the next round of state's electoral maps should be drawn. On Thursday, February 11, the People's Maps Commission will hold a virtual hearing focused on the 1st CD. In order to participate, you will need to register to comment by 5 pm on Tuesday, Feb.

9; each participant will have three minutes to speak, via Zoom. Written comments can be made at [bit.ly/3trjFfl](https://bit.ly/3trjFfl) or [appengine.egov.com/apps/wi/peoplesmaps/writtencomment](https://appengine.egov.com/apps/wi/peoplesmaps/writtencomment). You can also watch the hearing without commenting. To learn more about the People's Maps Commission, go to [govstatus.egov.com/peoplesmaps](https://govstatus.egov.com/peoplesmaps).



## ***Biden Covid Relief Plan Inching Closer to Reality***

The U.S. Senate has begun a process known as budget reconciliation on President Biden's Covid relief package, a move that would allow passage of the bill with a simple majority, bringing it one step closer to becoming law. The package includes several major provisions to help struggling families, small businesses, state and local government, and school districts. These include:

- \$1,400 direct payments to individuals making under \$75,000 year/\$2,800 per couple under \$150,000; \$1,400 per dependent child
- An extension through September of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and federal extended unemployment benefits, as well as an increase to \$400 per week in federal supplemental unemployment benefits
  - \$25 billion in rental assistance for low- and moderate-income households
  - An extension of the federal eviction moratorium through September
- Reinstatement of paid sick and family leave, which had expired in December, through September



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- \$20 billion for veterans healthcare
- \$4 billion for mental health and substance abuse treatment
- \$170 billion to K-12 schools, colleges and universities to help them safely reopen or to facilitate remote learning
  - Funds an additional 100,000 public health workers
- \$350 billion in aid to state and local governments to keep frontline workers employed, distribute vaccines, increase testing, reopen schools and maintain vital services
  - Increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour
- \$15 billion for a new grant program for small businesses, separate from PPP



### *Time Running Out to Request Absentee Ballot for Spring Primary*

It seems like just yesterday that we were voting in the fall election, but another election is just weeks away. The spring primary election will be held on Tuesday, February 16. The deadline to request an absentee ballot is February 11. If you haven't yet done so and wish to, you can request an absentee ballot at [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov).

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