



ROBERT W. WIRCH

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

February 12, 2021



Dear friend,

Happy Valentine's Day to all of you. Between the ongoing pandemic and the frigid temperatures, we can all use a little love and kindness right now. It's been a busy week in the State Capitol, as a number of committees met on various pieces of legislation and "teasers" of Governor Evers' budget proposal have begun to emerge. Meanwhile, Wisconsin took a huge step forward in vaccination progress, moving from the middle of the pack to first in the nation in per capita daily vaccinations. It's great news, but we still must be patient, as it will be some time before everyone who wants a vaccine can get one. A second case of the more contagious, more dangerous U.K. variant was found in the state this week, this time in Waukesha County, and health experts warn that this means there are likely many more out there. It's illustrative of the fact that, while we are making progress, we aren't out of the woods yet. We still need to stay home as much as we can, and mask up when we have to go out. Stay warm, stay safe, and stay healthy.

Sincerely,

Bob

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In Case You Missed It

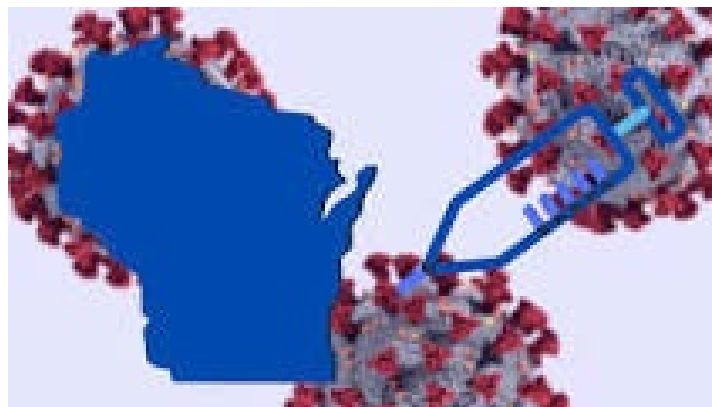
small business **SPOTLIGHT**



The Sausage Kitchen in Racine Has Been a Family Affair for Over 60 Years



In 1958, Ted and Lil Miller of Kenosha opened a delicatessen and corner store on Racine's northside. Since then, the Miller family has grown the business, serving up the finest meats and delicious sandwiches, becoming a local favorite. In addition to meats and cheeses, The Sausage Kitchen imports hard-to-find items, such as grape leaves, roasted peppers, cracked wheat and more. Currently, Dave and Pat Miller own and operate The Sausage Kitchen, while their son, Chris, helps run the sandwich shop. The Sausage Kitchen is currently running limited hours due to Covid-19. For current hours or to learn more, visit <https://www.facebook.com/Sausage-Kitchen-126142707463134> or <https://www.sausagekitchenracine.com>.





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Covid Vaccine Updates

Kenosha County has launched a Covid-19 Vaccine Call Center. The call center is open to people who don't have access to schedule a vaccination appointment online. These people can call (262)605-6799 to speak with someone who will walk them through the appointment process, if they are eligible. The online list of Kenosha County Covid vaccine providers is still available, at <http://bit.ly/KCCCOVIDHub>, as well.

People in Racine can sign up for email updates on vaccination progress at <https://crchd.com/covid-19-vaccine>.



GOP in Legislature Walks Away from Compromise, Reinstates Unemployment Waiting Week and Costs State \$1.3 Million a Week

After going nearly ten months without passing a single piece of Covid-19 relief legislation, the Republican majority in the State Legislature seemed like they were finally ready to act. Senate Republicans had even reached a compromise with Governor Evers. While the agreed-upon bill contained some provisions Democrats didn't particularly like and others that didn't go quite far enough, many felt it was a good start and were ready to support it. Then at the last minute, like Lucy, Charlie Brown and the football, they broke the deal, instead passing legislation full of "poison pills" that they knew Governor Evers couldn't support and would veto. As a result, the state's one-week unemployment benefit waiting period went back into effect, and the state's eligibility for \$1.3 million per week in federal UI funds ended. The money, appropriated as part of the federal CARES Act last

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year, is available only to states that do not have an active unemployment waiting week. This comes weeks after Republican action to eliminate the statewide mask requirement put the state at risk of losing \$49 million in federal low-income food assistance.



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.

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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Governor Evers to Call for Medicaid Expansion, More Money for Mental Healthcare in State Budget

More aspects of Governor Evers' soon-to-be-released budget proposal have been revealed this week. As in his previous budget proposal, the Governor will call for full Medicaid expansion and taking the federal money that goes along with it. Additionally, Evers will propose a \$150 million investment in mental health services, including mental health programs for veterans, farmers, students and children, and those with substance abuse disorders. The Governor will give his budget address on Tuesday, February 16, at 7 pm. The speech can be watched at wiseye.org.

SUICIDE: #1 Threat to Police Officers

The number one killer of police officers is suicide. Law enforcement suicide occurs **1.5** times more frequently compared to the general population.

Prevalence of Issue



64% of Police suicides were a surprise



Over **100** police officers take their lives per year, dating back to 2008



15% - 18% of officers that commit suicide suffered from PTSD

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Legislation Easing the Way for Workers' Comp Benefits Due to PTSD for Public Safety Workers Moves Forward

A bill that I have supported, and even sponsored, for several years has moved forward after a public hearing and executive session vote in the Senate Labor and Regulatory Reform Committee, of which I am a member. Senate Bill 11 (SB11) would remove some current barriers preventing law enforcement members and fire fighters from receiving workers' compensation benefits for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from work-related incidents. Interested parties, including law enforcement and fire representatives, insurance companies, municipalities and labor unions have worked for years to find a compromise on this legislation. It looked like we were finally going to get it done last session. The bill passed the State Assembly, but Covid-19 hit before the Senate could vote. I am feeling good that this is the year that our public safety professionals get the help that they so need and deserve.

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/proposals/reg/sen/bill/sb11>



Governor's Council on Financial Literacy and Capability Created to Improve Financial Awareness and Inclusion

Governor Evers has issued an Executive Order creating the Governor's Council on Financial Literacy and Capability. The Council will provide guidance and strategies to help the Governor and Department of Financial Institutions improve the financial literacy, capability, and financial inclusion of Wisconsin's residents. The Council will look at ways that systemic racism creates barriers to financial wellness; explore ways to better educate young people; and emphasize preventing elder financial



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exploitation, among other areas of study and exploration. First Lady Kathy Evers will serve as an ambassador for promoting the Council's mission.



Find Your Polling Place for Tuesday Elections

Need to vote in person on Tuesday, February 16, but not sure where to go? Check out <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/FindMyPollingPlace> to find your polling place.

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