



DIANNE H. HESSELBEIN

STATE SENATOR • SENATE DISTRICT 27

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Contact: Sen. Dianne Hesselbein
608-266-6670

Can JFC Republicans Release Millions to Fight PFAS, Respond to Hospital Closures in Western WI? Legislature's Attorneys: The Short Answer is Yes

New legal memo confirms Republican lawmakers can release millions to fight PFAS statewide and stabilize healthcare access in the Chippewa Valley at any time

MADISON —Republican lawmakers have insisted for weeks and months that they cannot release hundreds of millions in investments the Legislature already approved to respond to pressing challenges facing Wisconsin like PFAS contaminants and rural hospital closures.

[A newly released legal memo](#) prepared by the nonpartisan Wisconsin Legislative Council, which provides legal and policy analysis and advice to members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, confirms that, in fact, Republicans can release millions of funds at any time—Republican lawmakers are just choosing not to.

There is a little doubt that the Joint Finance Committee has too much power. The Legislature passed the budget last summer and approved the funding. That budget was signed by Governor Evers. And now one committee is sitting on PFAS funds and separately passed dollars for hospital services despite clear and present crises.

In recent months, Republican lawmakers worked overtime to claim that the committee cannot release desperately needed investments. These investments include \$125 million to address PFAS contamination statewide and \$15 million to respond to abrupt hospital closures affecting the entire Chippewa Valley region—funds that have been sitting idle in Madison unspent for 335 days and 97 days, respectively.

Can Republican JFC co-chairs and members release these desperately needed investments that were approved weeks and months ago now? Of course they can. Just as we've said all along.

The nonpartisan Wisconsin Legislative Council agrees, affirming in a new memo what Wisconsin Democrats have said all along: “the short answer is that JFC could do so...” and Republicans can meet to release these funds and address these pressing state challenges at any time.

What the people of Wisconsin have made clear is they want resources to address PFAS contamination, and the people and dedicated healthcare providers of Western Wisconsin have been loud and clear in their call for help in the face of a healthcare access crisis.

What Republicans have made clear is that they simply do not care what the people want or need—they are not on your side.

It is unfortunate that efforts to respond to and address statewide priorities can be delayed, obstructed, blocked, and bottled up by a Republican-controlled committee where nearly 70 percent of the state has no representation. The committee's co-chairs representing just a tiny fraction of the state should not be able to obstruct state government from functioning or be able to withhold critical investments the full Legislature already approved with broad, bipartisan support.

Now that we can safely put an end to the silly fiction Republicans have worked to peddle by pretending they cannot release these investments that are sitting before them, it's time for Republicans to act.