

Rep. Ohnstad: Long delayed GOP COVID bill falls short

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MADISON – Today the Wisconsin State Assembly considered Assembly Bill 1, which includes COVID-19 related provisions. The bill passed on a party line vote, however leaders in the State Senate have said they will not take up this bill as drafted and Governor Evers has also indicated that he does not support particular provisions included in the proposal.

In response to the vote today, Representative Tod Ohnstad (D-Kenosha) provided the following statement:

“The legislation we were presented with today has some positive aspects, but unfortunately it includes provisions that my colleagues and I cannot support, Governor Evers does not support, and even the Republican-led State Senate has said they will not be considering. Essential provisions to help the state through the pandemic should not be used as a way to advance ideological and special interest priorities. There are also major concerns about the critical provisions that the legislation fails to include.

This bill takes away from the authority of the administration to swiftly respond to the current pandemic, takes away from the local control of school boards and local governments to determine how best their communities respond, takes away the ability of individuals to seek legal recourse for negligent actions that placed their health at risk, and fails to include assistance to protect the health and economic well-being of Wisconsin families and small businesses. It fails to fund community testing and contact tracing. It fails to provide protections for frontline healthcare workers.

On Monday I joined my caucus as we put forward a comprehensive pandemic relief proposal, in addition to the legislation Governor Evers offered months ago, and a compromise bill of areas of common ground proposed more recently. Instead, the same Republican legislative majority that has sued the state to strip it of the critical tools needed to respond and has not met to consider coronavirus legislation since April continues to undermine the state's response."