



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Representative Melissa Sargent

Email: Rep.Sargent@legis.wi.gov

Phone: (608)-266-0960

**Call for Special Session Reflects the Will of the People**

MADISON –Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) released the following statement in response to Governor Tony Evers’ announcement calling for a Special Session to address gun violence:

“Too many lives have been cut short by the horrors of gun violence and suicide, too many others forever changed. The time for action is now, and I commend Governor Evers for his brave call upon the Wisconsin State Legislature to take meaningful steps to combat this growing public health crisis. Governor Evers knows that his message today may not be the politically expedient thing to do. However, he also knows that it is the right thing to do, and that his decision reflects the will of the people.

Everyone in our nation deserves to live without the fear of gun violence and without losing someone they love to suicide by firearm. Even so, gun violence continues to be a pervasive issue that touches every corner of our communities. This is why over 80% of Wisconsinites, including gun owners, support closing the background check loophole and implementing Extreme Risk Protection Orders in our state. This is why those on the front lines— including business owners, gun shops, counties and municipalities, law enforcement, and more— have been calling on our State Legislature to act.

As the lead author of legislation to close the background check loophole in our state, as well as to create an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) process to prevent tragedy in our communities, I know that this topic is one of high passions and sentiments— with 1 in 3 Wisconsinites owning a firearm and Wisconsin’s rich history of sporting and outdoor heritage, I know that we must work to support and respect proud firearm owners. I also know that as a state we do not have to choose between upholding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and preventing gun violence in our communities. These pieces of legislation are pragmatic and lifesaving, as proven by data from the many other states who have enacted them and saved lives, while still upholding rights for responsible and law-abiding gun owners.

We all have been impacted by gun violence in some way, and we certainly all know many others who have as well. The fact is, that people in our state are dying. Yet, partisan antics here in the state Capitol have continued to work keep us divided and prevent us from enacting the will of the people of our state. Governor Evers’ call for a Special Session to address gun violence is also a call to put partisan bickering and divides aside, and to prioritize what truly matters— that lives are being lost, and immediate action is needed.

We cannot continue to stand idly by as our communities struggle to adapt to a world in which gun violence is the new norm. We cannot wait to take action until the gun violence epidemic strikes Wisconsin again. This issue is one of life and death. It transcends any party lines, or partisan divides. And it is worth rolling up our sleeves, coming to the table together, discussing our differences, and taking meaningful steps to combat gun violence in our state.

The time for action is now. I join Governor Evers in his call for a Special Session to address gun violence in our communities, and to save lives. It is time to do the right thing for Wisconsin.”

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*Melissa Sargent is a State Representative in the Wisconsin Assembly, representing the 48<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, which covers the east and north sides of the city of Madison and the village of Maple Bluff*