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SEN. JEFF SMITH: “THE WORK DOES NOT STOP HERE”

Sen. Smith’s Statement Regarding the Passage of the COVID-19 Response Bill

MADISON – During today’s virtual Senate Floor session, Senator Jeff Smith (D – Brunswick) voted in favor of the [COVID-19 Response Bill](#).

The COVID-19 legislative relief package includes measures to provide initial support for Wisconsin residents affected by the pandemic, by repealing the one-week waiting period to receive unemployment benefits, providing affordable COVID-19 testing and treatment, and more. Enactment of the state legislative package will leverage additional federal funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Prior to the bill’s passage, Senator Smith and his Democratic colleagues introduced three amendments to create a more comprehensive COVID-19 relief package and fill in the gaps where the legislative proposal, introduced by Republicans fell short. The amendments included provisions to move future elections to a mail-in process and other steps to ensure Wisconsin residents can vote safely in future elections; extend relief efforts to any future declared public emergencies; and provide greater support to front-line workers, business owners, public health professionals and Wisconsin families. Republicans rejected all three amendments.

Passage of the COVID-19 Response Bill comes more than three weeks after the date when Governor Evers first introduced his COVID-19 public health emergency [relief package](#) on March 21st. On April 1st, Governor Evers introduced a second [legislative package](#) including additional proposals to support Wisconsin residents during the public health emergency. Republicans waited 17 days since the federal government passed the CARES Act on March 27th to introduce this proposal, despite having two relief packages from the Governor available to provide immediate relief to Wisconsinites.

“I voted for the COVID-19 Response Bill to provide relief to Wisconsin residents during this unprecedented public health emergency,” said Senator Smith. “However, we have a lot more we must do to offer substantial support to farmers, businesses and Wisconsin families impacted by COVID-19.

“I hope my Republican colleagues, in good conscience, aren’t kicking their feet up thinking what they did today was enough to help our state. To be clear, the work does not stop here. The future of our state depends on the difficult decisions and sacrifices we make right now. I am already prepared to meet again and vote on stronger measures for a more resilient Wisconsin. I now ask Republicans to step up, join Democrats and do more for the people of Wisconsin.”

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The 31st Senate District includes all of Buffalo and Pepin counties and portions of Trempealeau, Pierce, Dunn, Eau Claire and Jackson counties and very small portions of Chippewa and St. Croix counties.