



# Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

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## **EVERS CONTINUES “MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY” APPROACH ON KENOSHA** Governor Refuses to Consider ARPA Funding for Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood

MADISON – Senator Van Wanggaard (R-Racine) expressed disappointment with Governor Evers refusal to consider using a portion of the \$2.5 billion in American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds at his disposal to support the Kenosha STEM Innovation Center. Last week Wanggaard requested Evers use \$9.75 million of the ARPA funds to jumpstart this important project for the area.

“I wish I could say I’m surprised, but Evers refusal to consider using ARPA for the Kenosha STEM Innovation Center is par for the course,” said Wanggaard. “If he doesn’t get what he wants, he refuses to take other suggestions. He was slow to react seriously and listen following last year’s riots, and now, he just turned his back on redeveloping Kenosha. He’s more interested in playing the blame game than helping. And Kenosha suffers again.”

The Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood is a proposed redevelopment project of the former American Motors area in Kenosha. Modeled after the Cortex Innovation Center in St. Louis, the Kenosha STEM Innovation Center would be a small business and minority-owned business revitalization and workforce training center, and economic entrepreneurial project. With the inclusion of a STEM High School, the facility would develop digitally-skilled and entrepreneurial talent from the Southeastern Wisconsin region. It has the support of elected officials, university and technical college administrators, and business industry leaders throughout southeastern Wisconsin.

Following the Joint Finance Committee’s decision to not bond for the project, Wanggaard and Kerkman wrote to Governor Evers asking him to use the ARPA funds at his sole disposal for the project. Area democrats expressed similar thoughts about utilizing funding other than bonding. On Tuesday, Evers wrote back to Wanggaard and Kerkman, telling them to put the project in the budget.

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“Governor Evers constantly thinks he has all the right answers. He doesn’t,” said Wanggaard.  
“Good ideas come from everywhere - all it takes is an open ear. Unfortunately, Governor Evers only wants people to do what he says. Governing doesn’t work that way. And if he hasn’t learned that in his first 2 ½ years I don’t think he ever will.”

“Using the ARPA funds just makes sense. This would be using one-time dollars for a project that will pay dividends for generation. I can’t imagine why he wouldn’t use less than ½ of 1 percent of ARPA for Kenosha,” concluded Wanggaard.

[You can read Senator Wanggaard and Representative Kerkman’s letter of Thursday by clicking here:](#)

[You can read Governor Evers’ response to Wanggaard and Kerkman by clicking here.](#)