

March 22, 2020

Dear Governor Evers, Speaker Vos and Majority Leader Fitzgerald:

We want to thank you for your leadership related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been thoughtful, responsible, and smartly aggressive, as you take the actions necessary to reduce spread of the illness and keep Wisconsinites safe.

We urgently ask you to apply that same approach to voting. Please take action now to reduce the risk of our residents, members of our staff and our election workers, and to avoid unnecessary disenfranchisement of voters.

In many communities across Wisconsin, in-person absentee voting has already begun. Nearly all places will start such voting tomorrow, and it will continue for the next two weeks. Based on the dramatic increase in absentee voting that we have already experienced, it is almost certain that large numbers of people will show up at government buildings to vote this way. The health risks involved will be multiplied once again on the actual Election Day, April 7.

Please offer us solutions to protect those citizens.

Local government leaders and each of the local government organizations have presented a number of options to various state offices for protecting citizens' health and rights to vote. As yet we have not seen a sufficient response from the state. More needs to be done and done quickly.

Advice and orders from federal, state and local public health professionals is clear: Limit personal contact, especially in large groups (more than 10 currently). Please give us the tools to live by this when it comes to voting.

We recognize concerns about disenfranchisement, and we fully support our rules around elections in normal situations. These are not normal circumstances -- and the potential for disenfranchisement is actually higher if we proceed like we are. Many people will stay away from the polls for fear of contacting COVID-19, or spreading it, unless something changes.

Please do not force citizens to choose between getting sick, or voting. Act now.

In good health,

SEE ATTACHED LIST OF SIGNATORIES. (The list currently includes 221 local leaders. Because we gave signers a short deadline, not all names have been added to this list. There is an additional list of at least 65 local leaders whose names are being inputted. An updated list will be presented to your office on Monday.)