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## **Rep. Steffen Calls on GBCI Prisoners to Make Masks for Hospitals, First Responders**

*Current prison textile production easily transitioned during COVID-19 crisis*

**Madison** – “GBCI is notorious for its violence, crumbling facility and overcrowding. Now this maximum-security prison has the opportunity to transition from notorious to famous. Inmates at GBCI’s textile production program currently produce the clothing for Wisconsin’s 24,000 inmates. The inmates at GBCI have the skills and equipment to easily transition from clothing to life saving masks for area hospitals, first responders and nursing home staff” according to State Representative David Steffen.

“Doctor-approved material and methods are readily available to Allouez’s prison, and so is the labor”, said Rep. Steffen. “These inmates are very capable of producing thousands of these items in a short amount of time. Let’s put them to work on something critically necessary for our community.”

Steffen submitted a formal request to Governor Tony Evers and Department of Corrections Secretary Kevin Carr yesterday to begin this program, along with detailed information on a readily available source material, HEPA 3-ply cloth, and a manufacturing training video for the inmates.

“This production could literally start next week. This isn’t some complicated process or supply chain issue,” continued Rep. Steffen. “If authorized today, we could have these masks in the hands of area medical staff and first responders within 10 days.”

“While this concept is unconventional, it’s immediately available. If there was ever a time for government to be creative and resourceful, it’s now.”

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