



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

April 13, 2020

DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY

Speaker Robin Vos
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Speaker Vos and Majority Leader Fitzgerald,

Frontline healthcare workers have been performing jobs vital for patients and public health during the COVID-19 pandemic. From hospitals and nursing homes to homecare agencies and first responder roles, frontline healthcare workers risk their own health and that of their families.

Many have called them heroes. We agree. Now, we need to ensure that these healthcare heroes have the protection and support necessary to continue their service on the frontlines of this pandemic.

As policy-makers we owe it to the public, public health, and those frontline healthcare workers to provide for what they need. We have heard directly from healthcare heroes about the circumstances confronting them; now it is up to us to act on their needs and with the urgency the situation demands.

Healthcare heroes have called on us to champion the following measures. We ask that you join with us to move them forward:

- 1. *P.P.E. Now:*** *Immediately increase procurement and distribution of life-saving protection equipment, with full public transparency.* Healthcare workers recognize the difficult environment of P.P.E. procurement and distribution but stress the critical and urgent necessity as well as the dire circumstances facing healthcare workers right now. As the Governor works to procure and distribute vital P.P.E. to where it is needed, we are ready to assist however possible as he exercises his executive authority to accomplish this goal.
- 2. *Fully-paid sick time*** *for any healthcare workers who contract or are exposed to COVID-19 or any other communicable disease.* This will ensure that healthcare workers will not jeopardize patient care or public health and keep healthcare workers from being forced to sacrifice their own economic security to protect health security for others.

3. **Hazard Pay for all healthcare workers.** They are literally risking their lives, and in some cases, the lives of their loved ones. Statements of thanks and support are not sufficient acknowledgement for their vital work. They need premium pay for working in dangerous, hazardous conditions. This is particularly important for the lowest-paid healthcare workers so that we retain them in this time for the critical but chronically undervalued roles they play.

4. **Full healthcare coverage with no out-of-pocket costs for healthcare workers.** Co-pays, deductibles, and other cost barriers to care will prevent the frontline healthcare workforce from getting their own care needed to best combat the pandemic.

As these healthcare heroes sacrifice and serve on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, policy-makers like us should be at the ready to provide for what they need. Our state's collective response must address these items. We stand ready to grant the Governor any additional authority needed to get P.P.E. to our frontline healthcare workers as soon as possible.

We support legislation to directly address fully-paid sick time, hazard pay, and full healthcare coverage for our frontline healthcare workers. Absent inclusion of this healthcare heroes package in forthcoming emergency response legislation, we call for both houses of the legislature to meet to adopt a standalone bill to accomplish these three policy goals.

It is critical that elected leaders take necessary, appropriate, and urgent action to protect and support the healthcare heroes defending, serving, and caring for all of us at this difficult and dangerous time. Let us take care of the healthcare heroes so that they can take care of patients and public health.

Frontline healthcare workers will continue performing their vital roles, but we need leadership in making policies to enable these heroes to serve in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wisconsin healthcare heroes are counting on us to act.

Sincerely,



Representative Robyn Vining



Representative Mark Spreitzer



Senator Tim Carpenter



Representative David Crowley



Representative Jonathan Brostoff

Senator Robert Wirch



Representative Jimmy Anderson



Representative Gary Hebl



Senator Fred Risser



Representative Steve Doyle



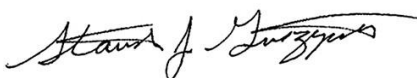
Representative Marisabel Cabrera



Senator Dave Hansen



Representative JoCasta Zamarripa



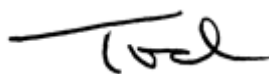
Representative Staush Gruszynski



Senator LaTonya Johnson



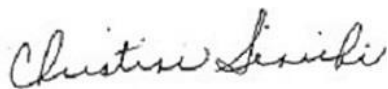
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Senator Jeff Smith



Representative Christine Sinicki



Representative Dianne Hesselbein



Senator Chris Larson



Representative Sondy Pope



Representative Jill Billings



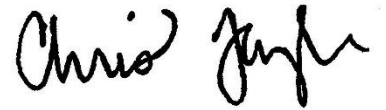
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Representative Katrina Shankland



Representative Don Vruwink



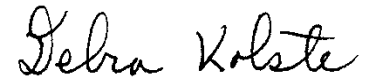
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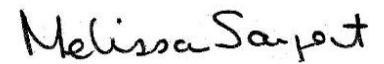
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