



For Release: March 13, 2020

Contact: State Senator Janis Ringhand: (608) 266-2253; SenRinghand@legis.wisconsin.gov

COVID-19 Pandemic Illustrates Importance of Paid Family Medical Leave

Today, State Senator Janis Ringhand urged her Republican colleagues to pass the Family Medical Leave Insurance Act, Senate Bill 596. Under the program a participating employee is eligible to receive a percentage of their pay during the time they take family or medical leave from work. The program would not cost employers any money. Employees pay for the benefit by contributing a certain percentage of their check into a trust fund. When an employee is on paid leave they will receive compensation from the trust fund.

Senator Ringhand cited the research of Nicolas Ziebarth, associate professor of economics at Cornell University in the College of Human Ecology as one reason for passing a paid Family Medical Leave law. The professor concluded that “when people gain access to paid sick leave, the spread of the flu decreases.”

Senator Ringhand echoed Vice President Pence’s concern “that workers who cannot afford to stay home will accelerate the spread of the Covid-19” and added “far too many people have no choice but to go to work when they are sick because they can’t afford to go a day without pay and some even risk losing their job for calling in sick.”

Twelve states, Washington D.C. and 30 cities and local jurisdictions have paid sick policies in place according to the USA Today.

“It’s time Wisconsin should join this group and enacts a paid Family Medical Leave policy. Not only will it be beneficial against the spread of COVID-19 but common illnesses as well,” concluded Senator Ringhand.

#