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Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

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Contact: GovPress@wisconsin.gov

Gov. Evers Unveils Robust Plan to Invest Federal American Rescue Plan Funds in Small Businesses, Families, and Communities Statewide, Vetoes Senate Bill 183

Governor's plan invests in restoring economic well-being, expanding broadband and building infrastructure, and continuing statewide pandemic response

MILWAUKEE — Gov. Tony Evers today unveiled his plan for investing the $3.2 billion in federal funding Wisconsin received from President Biden's American Rescue Plan and vetoed Senate Bill 183, which would have given the Legislature approval over the use of the federal funds. The governor's plan includes investments to continue the state's pandemic response, expand broadband and build infrastructure, and restore the economic well-being of families, workers, small business owners, and communities across the state.

“Our CARES dollars made all the difference in our state this past year, including supporting businesses across our state like the business we’re standing in today. That's why I'm excited to be able to announce we're going to be investing $2.5 billion from our American Rescue Plan funds into our state's economic recovery and making sure we can bounce back from COVID-19 and better than we were before this pandemic hit,” said Gov. Evers. “We can't afford for the Legislature to play politics with our funds under the American Rescue Plan—we're going to get folks support as quickly as we can.”

Last year, the state of Wisconsin received nearly $2 billion from the federal Coronavirus Aide, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Gov. Evers was able to use the money to get support to Wisconsinites across the state, helping 14,000 households pay rent, assist more than 1,100 food pantries, and invest in our kids’ childcare and after school programming. $379 million in CARES funds were used to support nearly 53,000 small businesses and restaurants, more than 15,000 farms, and our lodging, hospitality, and tourism industries. The funds were also used to distribute more than 26 million pieces of PPE and sanitizing supplies, more than 2.7 million testing and lab supplies, and $201 million through our Routes to Recovery program all for our local communities.

In response, Republicans in the Wisconsin State Legislature introduced legislation requiring legislative oversight and approval of the federal funds, despite having gone nearly 300 days without passing a bill during the coronavirus pandemic. Last week, Republicans also suggested they will consider suing over the funds, possibly delaying these resources from being distributed to Wisconsinites across the state.

“These funds don’t belong to me or any member of the Legislature, and these funds sure shouldn’t get caught up in another political back-and-forth where Republicans in the Legislature put politics before people or take nearly 300 days to act,” said Gov. Evers. “This money belongs to Wisconsinites and so many need this support—it would be unimaginable for Republicans to prevent these funds from going out to folks who need it the most.”

The governor's plan includes a $2.5 billion investment in the economic well-being of families, workers, small business owners, and communities across the state. The $2.5 billion investment includes $50 million for the tourism industry, which has been hit hard by the pandemic, and $600 million to help support businesses, building on the successful We're All In small business grant program which has helped nearly 53,000 businesses so far throughout the pandemic. In addition to these investments to ensure Wisconsin's economic recovery, the governor is also proposing a $200 million investment in infrastructure, a significant portion of which will go towards expanding broadband access. Finally, $500 million will go towards continuing statewide pandemic response efforts.

The veto message for SB 183 is available here.

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