



# DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

## Testimony on SB 38

*February 4, 2021*

Good afternoon members of the committee. I am here to testify in favor of Senate Bill 38, which would require Governor Evers to develop and distribute a plan for the return of formerly in-person state employees to in-person work. Senate Amendment 1 replaces the due date of this report from the date certain of February 28, 2020 to 21 days after publication.

COVID-19 has disrupted most facets of life for Wisconsinites. While the specific individuals and groups have changed, from the beginning almost a year ago, our policies have acknowledged that essential services must be delivered to Wisconsinites. An orderly return to in-person work for state employees is important for several reasons: 1) it will likely lead to increased productivity, 2) it is prudent to make these plans for budget planning purposes, and 3) it sends a message to Wisconsinites that their government will be returning to work as they also begin to return to their own workplaces.

The plan is not binding on the Governor and he retains all his powers regarding agency employment decisions. Also, SB 38 is limited to those employees who were performing their tasks at their places of employment last year. Thank you for considering this measure.



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# BARBARA DITTRICH

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 38<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

February 4, 2021

**Senate Committee on Government Operations, Legal Review and Consumer Protection**

**RE: Rep. Dittrich Testimony on SB 38** – relating to return to in-person work for state employees.

Good afternoon, Committee Chairman Stroebel and members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, Legal Review and Consumer Protection. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 38 along with Representative Rozar.

Throughout this pandemic a majority of Wisconsin citizens, both public and private employees, have been at their jobs doing everything from bagging groceries to saving lives. Wisconsinites all around our state have stepped up and performed their duties, many of them being deemed as “essential workers.”

The focus this bill are employees of the executive branch, paid at taxpayer expense. We should expect no less from our state employees than we do from our private employees. SB 38 speaks to the heart of that premise. It requires the governor to submit a plan to the legislature giving a timeframe for all state employees to whose job functions are performed in their offices, as expected before the beginning of the pandemic, to return to their offices to continue their duties.

I encourage Governor Evers to include safeguards in his plan, allowing for the safe return of state staff. The inspiration for these safeguards could be taken from the measures taken by essential workers throughout this pandemic.

Collaboration and governance are most effective when everyone is in the same room, discussing issues, ideas, and plans. At a time when government needs to collaborate in order to address the issues facing our state, our state’s public servants should be exhibiting every due diligence required of them on behalf of the people of our state.

To that end, I appreciate being able to testify in front of this committee, working on behalf of the individuals in my district and our state. With that, I welcome any questions this committee might have regarding this bill.