

## Trump's Coronavirus Crisis in Wisconsin: It's About Him, Not You

**Ladan Ahmadi**

Deputy Director of Media Relations

[@Ladan\\_Ahmadi](https://twitter.com/Ladan_Ahmadi)**Imani Webb**

Press Advisor

Every day, reporting sheds new light on President Trump's disastrous mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the consequent economic crisis, and the impact on the everyday lives of Wisconsinites. These failures, born of Trump's incompetence and bottomless narcissism, are no longer surprising to anyone. What is less obvious for many voters, however, is the direct harm that his selfish mismanagement has caused *to them*.

If you follow politics closely, this failure by voters to connect the dots may strike you as surprising. But Third Way's research shows that while Trump's selfishness is obvious to everyone, the impact on voters' lives is not.

Wisconsinites know that Trump cares only about himself. What many don't know is why they should care. Democrats must tell them, with clear and simple examples like these:

**The Pandemic**

## THE PANDEMIC

**HIM:** *Trump is selling the fantasy that COVID-19 will ‘magically disappear’ because he thinks it will boost his poll numbers and the stock market.*

In late July, Wisconsin was placed in the “red zone” for coronavirus spread by the White House Coronavirus Task Force, making it a hotspot. Despite these ongoing alarming trends, Trump has insisted since early February that the virus is a “Democratic hoax” that will just go away on its own. He thinks that by disregarding safety measures, he has a better story to tell voters and that it will reassure investors.

**YOU:** *The virus is out of control everywhere, including in Wisconsin. Because of Trump’s self-serving fiction about it going away on its own, his Administration has no plan to stop it, putting every American in physical danger.*

Trump’s response has been the worst in the world, with the US seeing the most cases and most deaths overall of any nation on earth. Wisconsin saw its largest single-day case count (1,498) on September 8<sup>th</sup>. As of early September, COVID-19 had killed more than 189,000 Americans across the country and sickened 6.32 million.

## Testing

**HIM:** *Trump wants his staff to slow down testing to make it seem as if case numbers are lower.*

President Trump has ordered coronavirus testing be slowed down because he thinks this will result in lower case numbers, even going as far as cutting spending on National Guard assistance to Wisconsin, where members help conduct tests. He believes (bizarrely) that more testing means more cases, and more cases are bad for him politically.

**YOU:** *Instead of providing desperately needed leadership and assistance, he creates ineffective plans and watches Wisconsinites suffer the consequences.*

Some of Wisconsin’s most crucial industries, mainly disease-sensitive nursing homes, are suffering from faulty PPE from FEMA. Trump’s plan to take care of nursing homes clearly lacks true compassion for the many who are suffering and is a major indication that he prioritizes his own ego over the lives of millions of Americans.

## Masks

**HIM:** *Until he realized it was politically damaging for him, Trump supported those who refused to wear masks.*

The president has politicized mask-wearing. Even though most of the people around him followed safety-precautions and wore face coverings, Trump himself was unmasked when he toured Fincantieri Marine in June, putting Wisconsinites in harm’s way

~~Trump is manipulating the virus, putting Wisconsinites in harm's way.~~

**YOU:** *The politicization of masks is making the pandemic more dangerous and putting Wisconsinites at risk.*

Until recently, the president rejected science and ignored pleas from the CDC Director who said that the virus would be under control in 4-8 weeks if everyone wore a mask. The damage is done, however – emboldened GOP lawmakers in Wisconsin are capitalizing on Trump's politicization of face coverings and are challenging Gov. Evers's statewide mask mandate.

## **Schools**

**HIM:** *Trump is demanding that Wisconsin schools reopen with few safety protocols, because he believes that will help him politically.*

Wisconsin schools are eligible for roughly \$47 million under the CARES Act, and yet Trump wanted to withhold federal aid from schools that do not fully reopen. He's also pressured the CDC – who's director has already stated that hotspot states should delay in-person learning – to loosen reopening guidelines.

**YOU:** *While Trump plays political games with your health, Wisconsinites are concerned about the health of their children, parents and caregivers, school employees and entire communities.*

Even though most parents are uncomfortable with their children returning to school, Trump continues to push to reopen schools, attacking the CDC and ignoring public health professionals' objections to give himself a political boost. Wisconsin's largest teachers union is calling on the government and state health and education leaders to require virtual learning as the school year begins.

## **Voting**

**HIM:** *Trump thinks that discrediting mail-in-voting will help his election prospects, so he's trying to turn public opinion against it.*

Even though 80 percent of GOP members in the Wisconsin Legislature voted by mail in April elections, Trump is spouting inaccurate statistics about the amount of fraudulent ballots associated with mail-ins. The rate of fraud in the 2016 and 2018 elections was just 0.0025 percent and the President and many of his staffers vote-by-mail.

**YOU:** *The reality is that creating distrust for mail-in-voting will harm the demographic that is simultaneously the most at-risk for COVID-19 and the most present at polls: seniors.*

Trump's claims will discourage many from voting absentee, causing more in-person voting, where 60% of poll workers nationwide are seniors. There is absolutely no evidence of systemic

~~bias toward one party in mail-in voting, and the rate of fraud is incredibly low~~

~~bias toward the party in mail-in voting, and the rate of fraud is increasing now.~~

## **Conclusion**

It is incumbent upon everyone working to defeat Trump, especially in the must-win state of Wisconsin, that we make clear the connection between Trump's selfishness and their own lives. As we discovered in 2016, voters can conclude that his conduct (like on the "Access Hollywood" tape) might be abhorrent, but it remains irrelevant to their everyday lives. This time, they must understand that his selfishness in the face of a pandemic matters enormously: it is dangerous to them, their families, and their communities.