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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WISCONSIN FAITH VOICES FOR JUSTICE URGES OUR COMMUNITIES TO
REMAIN SAFER AT HOME!**

Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice is appalled and dismayed at the Wisconsin Supreme Court's decision to overturn Governor Evers' Safer at Home order. The Supreme Court has sacrificed public safety in favor of partisan ideology.

While the Governor's Safer at Home order has been successful in flattening the curve of projected coronavirus cases, the metrics for re-opening the state, as outlined in the Badger Bounce Back plan, have not yet been fully met. There still has not been a downward curve in the reporting of new COVID-19 or flu-like symptom cases, according to the Department of Health Services. Scientists at the University of Wisconsin have shown that social distancing has begun to work but have also warned that now is not the time to re-open the state (<https://www.wpr.org/more-wisconsinites-leave-home-health-experts-warn-against-ending-social-distancing>).

In an amicus brief Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice filed in support of the Governor's Safer at Home order, Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Executive Director of WI Faith Voices for Justice, said, "As a rabbi, I look to Jewish tradition to inform my values and beliefs. For Jews, pikuach nefesh – saving a life – is paramount above all other commandments...For all faiths, the imperative to look out for the most vulnerable in our society leads us to support all actions that do exactly that. This virus most cruelly affects the most vulnerable in our society – the elderly, the immune-compromised, and particularly and disproportionately affects African Americans and other communities of color. Social distancing has been shown in past pandemics to slow the spread of disease, and it seems to be doing the same now. Governor Evers' Safer at Home order is effective, and necessary, to keep us all safe."

While we recognize the negative impact Safer at Home is having on our economy, it is imperative that we all stay home to protect the safety of ourselves, our families, our communities, and especially our first responders and health care workers who risk their lives to care for us. We all are deeply concerned about the economic impact this pandemic has wrought, particularly upon those least able to withstand an economic shock. Small business owners fear

bankruptcy. People are struggling with sudden unemployment, lay-offs, cut hours. They do not know when or if they will be able to get back to work, nor how they are going to pay the rent, feed their families, pay for health care, and keep the lights on and the water running. However, the way to help is not to open the state prematurely and risk everyone's health. Rather it is for the Legislature to pass a relief bill that will help those who need it most.

We appreciate the more than one hundred religious leaders who signed on to our amicus brief. They understood that the right to worship freely is truly measured by how spiritual devotion serves the public good—in this case, their flocks' health—not by how many congregants can be squeezed into a house of worship. We anticipate that the religious community will continue to do the right thing and, on behalf of our members and the broader community, not encourage or support the premature opening of our state.

We applaud the decisions of elected officials in Madison, Milwaukee, Racine, and Brown County who have extended safer at home in their localities. Despite the Supreme Court's disastrous and dangerous ruling, we urge the people of Wisconsin to maintain social distancing, to limit their travel outside their homes to only the most vital of needs, to wear masks and stay six feet apart from others whenever outside the home, and to refrain from public gatherings of more than ten people until health experts, and not politicians, tell us it is safe.