O'NEILCANNON
HOLLMAN DEJONG & LAING S.C.

EMPLOYMENT LAWSCENE ALERT: WISCONSIN ISSUES NEW BAN ON MASS GATHERINGS OF 10 OR MORE PEOPLE–WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR MY BUSINESS?

Under the direction of Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has ordered a ban on mass gathering of 10 or more people. Pursuant to Emergency Order #5 Prohibiting Mass Gatherings of 10 People or More, a "mass gathering" is "any planned or spontaneous, public or private event or convening that will bring together or is likely to bring together 10 or more people in a single room or single confined or enclosed space at the same time." All gatherings that bring together fewer than 10 people in a single room or confined or enclosed space at the same time must preserve social distancing of six feet between people and follow all other public health recommendations issued by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and Centers for Disease Control. Additionally, all bars and restaurants in the State of Wisconsin shall be closed, except that restaurants may remain open for take-out or delivery service only. No seating may be provided, and no food may be consumed at the restaurant. Restaurants are to preserve social distancing of six feet between customers during pick up. Under the order, all public and private schools and institutions of higher learning shall be closed for instructional and extracurricular activities.

This does not affect critical infrastructure and services such as grocery stores, food pantries, childcare centers, pharmacies, and hospitals. Retail food establishments, such as grocery stores, convenience stores, and farmer's markets, are required to close all seating intended for consuming food, cease self-service operations of salad bars, beverage stations, and buffets, and prohibit customers from self-dispending all unpackaged food. Office spaces are also exempt from the Order, although they are required to implement social distancing, including teleworking, as much as practicable. Additionally, manufacturing, processing, distribution, and production facilities are exempt from this Order. This is intended to encourage social distancing and limit the spread of coronavirus. This Order goes into effect at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, and will remain in effect for the duration of the public health emergency declared in Governor Evers's Executive Order #72 or until a superseding order is issued. At this time, there is no specific end date to Executive Order #72 or the Order Prohibiting Mass Gatherings of 50 People or More. Failure to comply with this directive could result in fines and imprisonment.

The full Order can be found here.