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State Representative • Serving the 75th Assembly District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Democrats Reject Help for Rural Wisconsin

Madison – In the budget we passed this summer, Republicans included \$15 million to build a Northwest Regional Mental Health Crisis Center in Eau Claire. It was an opportunity for Governor Evers to show he could step outside of his Madison-Milwaukee bubble and support the priorities of our part of the state too. Not only did he veto the funding, he sent it to Madison.

Today, the Assembly voted to override that veto, and say loud and clear that this critical facility is above politics – that mental health matters, and that half the state should not be ignored.

Democrats squandered that opportunity.

Right now, the only two crisis centers in the state are in Madison and Oshkosh. My colleagues and I heard what police officers across northwestern Wisconsin were saying: pulling officers out of our communities to take people in crisis to Madison or Oshkosh is just not sustainable. Police chiefs from Shell Lake, Rice Lake, River Falls, and even Superior wrote in support of more beds in the Chippewa Falls area.

There are 63 Republicans in the Assembly. All we needed was for two of our Democrat colleagues to stand up and do the right thing. They refused.

Our district is part of the 25th Senate District, which encompasses the most northwestern part of the state. That district includes two other Representatives: Nick Milroy and Beth Meyers. Both are Democrats. Rep. Jodi Emerson of Eau Claire, a Democrat, is nearby too. Not one of them had the courage to stand up and say, “My own constituents matter more than politics.”

This was not a tricky vote. There were no poison pills, no unrelated issues, and no complicated sets of priorities to balance. Just one priority: giving our area access to facilities that can help patients who are in a state of crisis.

Our officers are stretched far too thin as it is. We need to have an option to keep them, and our families close. A facility in Eau Claire would be a major improvement for these officers. It would mean faster care for those people going through a crisis and safer and healthier communities for us all.

Sadly, this was a pattern for Democrats today. In all, Republicans brought up override votes on three items. All of them were focused on supporting mental health priorities, including raising reimbursement rates, which is the reason our Cumberland Healthcare System had to quit providing service years ago. These are priorities Democrats claim repeatedly that they support,

and blame Republicans for not funding.

But the simple fact is that when given a clear, black-and-white, up-or-down choice, Democrats said “No.”

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