



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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November 20, 2019

NEWS RELEASE:
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement on Veto of CNA Shortage Relief Legislation

MADISON– Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) and Representative Warren Petryk (R-Eleva) released the following statement after Governor Tony Evers vetoed 2019 Assembly Bill 76 which aligns the required hours of instructional programs to train certified nursing assistants (CNA) with federal training requirements and the requirements in surrounding states like Minnesota. This bill, authored by Senator Cowles and Representative Petryk and titled the CNA Shortage Relief Legislation, was passed with bipartisan support in both houses of the Legislature and received bipartisan co-sponsorship:

Senator Cowles stated, “It’s unfortunate that Governor Evers chose to veto this bipartisan bill without bothering to discuss the merits of the CNA Shortage Relief Legislation with me prior to his veto. At a time in our state when nursing homes and home health agencies are being forced to turn away residents due to lack of staffing necessary to provide care. This legislation is needed more than ever to address the CNA shortage; especially in our rural and northern communities.”

Representative Petryk stated, “The governor has shown a perplexing and blatant disregard for people in desperate need of skilled healthcare in our communities. First, he vetoed the proposed mental health crisis center for Western Wisconsin, and today he vetoed a prudent change in state law that would have helped address our critical nursing shortage. As Chair of the Assembly Workforce Development Committee, I worked with Senator Cowles and multiple stakeholders to find a simple, bi-partisan solution to move the needle forward to help address the severe nursing shortage in our state. This staffing shortage is negatively affecting our healthcare facilities throughout the state and is making it difficult for facilities to provide the top quality care that we can depend upon for our loved ones. To say that I am very disappointed that this effort failed because of the decision and actions of one person in Madison would be an understatement.”

Senator Cowles continued, “This very reasonable legislation is a small change to help students become the caretakers that the residents of these facilities deserve sooner while still ensuring a credible licensure process. Despite the fact that a number of our surrounding states have instructional hours set at the same level as proposed in this legislation, the Governor vetoed a partial solution to the health care staffing shortage supported by both Democrats and Republicans.”

Assembly Bill 76, in addition to earning bipartisan support, had the support of a wide variety of organizations including LeadingAge Wisconsin, The Mayo Clinic Health System, Outagamie and Washington Counties, Disability Service Provider Network, Americans For Prosperity, Home Care Association of America, and more.

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