



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

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Rural EMS Bill Passes the State Senate

Bill makes the NREMT Exam Optional to Remove Recruitment Obstacles

MADISON, WI - Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green), today announced that the State Senate passed Senate Bill (SB) 89, which makes the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) exam optional for Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs).

“EMS departments are staples of our rural communities. However, many rural, volunteer departments are struggling to recruit new members and retain current members. In the Fall of 2019, I held four ‘Rural Volunteer EMS Summits’ across the 17th Senate District to answer the question, ‘*What can the state do to encourage volunteers and help with recruitment and retention of rural volunteer EMS?*’ Nearly 70 EMS volunteers, representing almost 30 different departments, attended. SB 89 is one of three bills that are the direct result of feedback I received at these Summits,” Sen. Marklein said.

“This bill did not start in the State Capitol. It started in Darlington, Lancaster, Elroy and Plain,” Sen. Marklein said. “These changes are not going to solve the volunteer shortage overnight, but will remove obstacles and improve state-level regulation. There is still work to do, but I am proud of this initiative to support the local men and women who respond when we need them.”

SB 89 will make the NREMT exam optional for EMRs. However, individual departments will have the ability to decide whether or not the NREMT exam will still be required for credentialing with their department.

“As I understand it, the NREMT exam is difficult, expensive, and doesn’t always test for relevant information. Many departments told me that they would have two, three, or even eight more volunteers if the NREMT exam was not a required part of the initial licensure process. No less than 10 other states, including Minnesota, do not require the NREMT exam for EMRs,” Sen. Marklein said.

SB 89 leaves in place the requirement that each EMR would need to complete a Department of Health Services (DHS) approved training course and pass all other applicable tests and hands-on experiences to receive licensure. This bill simply states that DHS cannot require the NREMT exam to be one of the requirements for licensure for EMRs.

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