

Gov. Evers: Signs bill to ensure continuing healthcare coverage for the families of fallen heroes

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today signed bipartisan legislation, Senate Bill 266, now 2019 Wisconsin Act 19, into law. The bill ensures that the surviving immediate family of fallen state and local law enforcement officers, firefighters, and EMS first responders continue to receive healthcare insurance coverage after the loss of a loved one in the line of duty.

“These folks put their lives on the line every day to serve and protect the people of Wisconsin,” Gov. Evers said. “Ensuring that their families will continue to have health insurance coverage after a tragedy is the least we can do for fallen heroes and their families. I am proud to sign this important bipartisan bill into law.”

Senate Bill 266, now 2019 Wisconsin Act 19:

- Expands the provision for firefighters to specify that health insurance premiums must also continue to be paid for the surviving spouse and dependent children of a law enforcement officer who dies in the line of duty. A law enforcement officer who is covered by the provision includes an officer in a local police department, a county jailer, and a Marquette University police officer.
- Specifies that a city, village, town, or county, and Marquette University, will be reimbursed annually from the police and fire protection fund for the health insurance premium payments made under this provision on behalf of a firefighter or law enforcement officer.
- Requires a city, village, town, or county, and Marquette University, to maintain confidentiality for

personally identifiable information of a surviving spouse or dependent children for whom the premium payments are made.

- Revises the payments for a dependent child to terminate when a child reaches age 26 in all cases, without being tied to school enrollment.
- Creates a definition for what it means to die in the line of duty, which is undefined under current law. A death in the line of duty is one that occurs as a “direct and proximate” result of sustaining an injury, contracting an infectious disease, or experiencing exposure to hazardous materials or conditions, while engaged in an action that is required or authorized, and for which compensation is provided or would have been provided if the officer or firefighter had been on duty.