

Rep. Quinn: Says vetoes hurt rural areas

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Madison - Representative Romaine Quinn (R-Barron) voiced concerns over vetoes Governor Tony Evers made to the biennial budget this week. The Governor modified or deleted 78 provisions in the budget passed by the Legislature.

“The Legislature heard from people across the state and put together a budget that was a significant step in the right direction for all Wisconsinites,” said Rep. Quinn. “By using his veto power to cut down the budget we sent him, Governor Evers has picked winners and losers. It’s especially unfortunate that he chose to pit rural districts against his base in Milwaukee and Madison.”

Rep. Quinn said that vetoes of the transportation portion of the budget were especially problematic for outstate areas. “I ran on a promise to make sure rural areas had enough money to fix the roads that we use to get to school and work every day,” he said. “The Governor ran on the same promise. That’s why I’m so confused that he would cut down funding for the Local Road Improvement Program.”

The Governor’s veto cut local road aids by \$15 million. In his veto message, Governor Evers said, “I am also requesting the Department of Administration secretary not to allot [the remaining \$75,000,000] funds.” This action would allow the Department of Transportation to allocate this transportation money to projects in Milwaukee and Madison, rather than the rural roads the Legislature intended it for.

“Sadly, that’s not the only rural project the Governor cut,” said Rep. Quinn. “The Legislature earmarked \$15,000,000 to build a regional mental health crisis center in Eau Claire. Unfortunately, the Governor chose to veto that too.”

The center designated by the Legislature would treat people suffering mental health crises; currently, the only treatment centers of this kind are the Mendota Mental Health Institute and the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center, both located in Madison, and Winnebago Mental Health Institute in Oshkosh. “Police across district have told me how hard it is to have to transport people to the Mendota facilities, using precious time and resources that could have been spent combatting the meth crisis and serving our communities,” said Rep. Quinn. “Vetoing a center in northern Wisconsin in favor of more construction in Madison shows how out of touch the Governor is on rural issues.”

Other significant actions created by the Governor’s vetoes include cutting \$1,000,000 for Fab Labs, which give students access to cutting-edge technologies; a reduction to telehealth expansion programs by approximately \$2,700,000 over the biennium; and a rejection of a proposal to end disproportionately high payments to Milwaukee County’s child welfare services compared to other counties.

These are only a few of the items that show Governor Evers is only focused on Madison and Milwaukee,” said Rep. Quinn. “I and my colleagues will continue to work to make sure the needs of every part of the state are being met, but Governor Evers’ vetoes make clear that we don’t have a good partner in the process.”