

Howard Marklein: Session recap and the State of the State

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The Senate and Assembly were in session on January 21, 2020. By the end of the day, four more of my bills were passed by both houses of the legislature and will be sent to Governor Tony Evers for signature. I am very thankful for all of the constituents who have worked with me on this good, problem-solving legislation. All four bills were passed with bi-partisan support and co-sponsors.

Governor Evers will soon be considering my bills related to powers of attorney, church stairway chairlifts, physical therapist licensure and farm credit priority lien status. This list may appear to be a hodge-podge of ideas, but each of these bills are supported by residents of the 17th Senate District. They all solve problems.

The Power of Attorney (POA) bill updates Wisconsin's advanced directives and healthcare POA laws to recognize the ability of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and physician assistants (PAs) to make professional, medical determinations. It also allows these same medical professionals to issue a Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) order following the request of a patient. This bill was initiated to acknowledge the reality that many patients utilize an APRN or PA for their primary care. In rural Wisconsin, this is a common occurrence. An APRN or PA is qualified to make these determinations.

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I worked with LaVerne Gordee from Jordan Lutheran Church in rural Green County to draft a bill to allow the church to install a stairway chairlift so that their parishioners can access the fellowship hall in the basement. We wrote legislation that creates a

very narrow building code exception to allow a church that is more than 100 years old to install a chairlift in a narrow stairway as long as there is access via a second stairway. This is a good bill that solves a local problem.

Physical Therapists in the 17th Senate District asked me to support legislation to create an interstate compact for them. This bill, similar to the nurse and physician compact bills I worked on in previous sessions, allows Wisconsin-certified physical therapists to practice in 26 states, including Iowa. This helps Wisconsin healthcare facilities to rapidly respond to the needs of their patients and improve access to care while giving physical therapists flexibility to work across state lines.

Finally, Senate Bill (SB) 438 adds the Farm Credit Administration to the list of priority lenders for certain classes of mortgage lenders. This helps Farm Credit by treating them the same as banks, credit unions and the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Agency (WHEDA).

Despite the Governor's criticism during the State of the State address on January 22, 2020, the legislature has been hard at work on bi-partisan, important legislation that solves problems. The reality is that the legislative cycle is a predictable, consistent process that we all work with. I have been aware, since Day 1, of the timeline and my role in moving proposals through the process. My team is diligent and persistent. We are getting things done.

During his speech, the Governor also outlined a couple of partisan goals, several bills, two new commissions and many positions in the layers of bureaucracy. While I am open to review his proposals and will be meeting with him to discuss them, I have already been working on many initiatives to solve real problems. From livestock siting to rural emergency medical services. From rural roads to the historic funding we delivered for schools in the last budget. From helping clear hurdles for local governments to supporting realistic strategies to impact clean water. We are already doing a lot together and I am proud of our efforts!

I will continue to show up at the Capitol - and in our communities - every single day. Thank you to all of the individuals and organizations from the 17th Senate District who have worked with me to move good legislation through the process. I know how hard you have worked on these things and I respect the value of your time and effort, no matter what partisan politicians say.

— Marklein, R-Spring Green, represents the 17th Senate District.