

# Rep. Shankland: Strong showing of support for AB 746 by Wisconsin emergency responders

Posted on Thursday, Jan 23, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON – Today, the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety held a public hearing on Assembly Bill 746, bipartisan legislation introduced by Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) and Sen. Testin (R- Stevens Point) which aims to protect emergency and roadside responders from harm when responding to incidents on our roadways through education, prevention, and enforcement measures. Emergency medical responders from across the state came to the hearing to voice their support, including members of the Amherst, Plover, Grand Chute, Endeavor/Moundville, Town of Westfield, and Delton Fire Departments and the Columbia County Sheriff's office.

The bill was drafted at the request of first responders from across Wisconsin, and was first initiated by Assistant Chief Brian Swan and Chief Victor Voss of the Amherst Fire District. The legislation enjoys the support of a strong coalition of allied organizations, including the Wisconsin EMS Association, the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin County Highway Association, the Badger State Sheriffs Association, Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association, the Wisconsin Professional Police Association, the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, the Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs Association, the Wisconsin Towing Association, and more.

Following the hearing, Rep. Shankland responded:

“Over the last year as I’ve worked on this legislation, I have heard from first responders from all over the state who say they would much rather run into a burning building than handle an accident on the side of the road. Their families

have told us they worry most when their loved ones have to respond to a highway incident. I am so grateful to everyone who made it down to the Capitol today to share their personal stories and support for the bill with the members of the committee.”

“AB 746 creates an emergency response area with the same protections as work zones and adds penalties for injuring or killing a worker on a roadway or roadside. The bill also allows first responders and emergency workers in emergency response areas to slow down traffic. Finally, it requires an advertising campaign from the DOT to educate the public and ensure that folks are aware of the hazards and penalties associated with traffic violations in emergency response areas, in the hopes that it will lead to heightened awareness and caution among drivers.

“It’s simple: we can do more to protect our first responders, and we can do more to protect all workers who are responding to an incident on the roadside or roadway. We also can do more to take responsibility as drivers. This bill accomplishes all three, and I am pleased to see such strong support for this legislation today, and will do all I can to continue moving it through the legislature.”