

Sen. Marklein: Rural Wisconsin is vetoed again

Posted on Friday, Apr 22, 2022

>> 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.](#)

On Good Friday, April 15, 2022, Governor Tony Evers vetoed Senate Bill (SB) 365 which I authored to improve the Rural Broadband Expansion Grant program so that it directs state funds to more rural communities that do not have service.

Once again, I am extremely disappointed that Governor Tony Evers vetoed a bill for rural Wisconsin. This is just another example of the Governor's preference for urban cities over the rural people I serve.

My rural broadband bill would have ensured that state funding for rural broadband expansion pays for projects that reach people who are not connected and do not have broadband service. My bill was another step toward dialing-in state investments in rural broadband expansion to specifically target communities that do not have any service or federal investments in broadband.

Instead, the Governor decided that he would rather be able to send these funds to places like the city of Milwaukee and other cities that already have multiple telecommunications providers and options for consumers. He also wants to be able to send these funds to communities that may have a federal project starting soon, rather than sending it to a community that has no options in sight.

My bill was supported by rural people, communities and the telecommunications providers who serve us in rural Wisconsin, as well as several of the large telecommunications providers who are working throughout the state. More than 22 rural-focused organizations and groups worked with us to craft this legislation. Nearly every ag-group in Wisconsin supported it. Telecommunications providers, big and small, supported it. Economic development organizations supported it.

I am very disappointed that the Governor didn't listen to the people who are trying to connect our communities and expand broadband into rural areas of Wisconsin. This issue is not going away and I will keep working until everyone who wants to be connected has the option.

Unfortunately, this is not the only rural-focused bill the Governor vetoed. He also vetoed my rural EMS bill that would have helped our small, local, rural EMS departments recruit and retain volunteers. He sided with big, professional, urban departments and ignored the pleas of rural communities that are struggling to provide EMS services.

As you may remember, this bill would have made the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) exam optional for entry-level, Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) licensing in Wisconsin. EMS departments would have the option to require it - or not - for EMRs only.

The Governor said he vetoed my rural EMS bill because it would lower standards. He is wrong. Every EMR would still need to be fully trained and tested by our technical college system and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). The only difference is that the local department could opt out of requiring the NREMT exam for EMRs only. EMTs would still be required to take it.

As many of you know, our communities are struggling to recruit and retain EMS volunteers. In fact, some of our departments have folded as a result of this challenge. This bill was requested by rural EMS volunteers who attended my summits in Darlington, Elroy, Plain and Lancaster. The Governor simply ignored their voices.

Again, I am frustrated that the Governor has vetoed rural Wisconsin again. I assure you that I am focused on the priorities of our communities and will continue to fight for you.

As always, please do not hesitate to connect with me to provide input, ideas or to seek assistance. Send an email to sen.marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov or call 608-266-0703.