

Rep. Kurtz, Sen. Marklein: Celebrate bipartisan passage of EMS proposals

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MADISON – Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) and Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) celebrated the bipartisan passage of Senate Bill 181 and Assembly Bill 905 in the State Assembly.

Assembly Bill 905 (AB-905) is a technical fix to define “health care facility” and “health care provider” to guarantee that all individuals providing critical health care are properly protected and able to do their jobs safely, no matter where they are providing care.

“This issue was brought to our attention by Sauk County District Attorney Michael Albrecht,” said Rep. Kurtz. “During a recent case, he realized that he could no longer charge someone for threatening to cause bodily harm to EMS providers, while he could still charge someone with making the same threats to a nurse in a hospital. Thanks to his diligent work, we’re able to get this corrected.”

As front-line first responders, EMS providers often deal with combative, disoriented, and upset patients which can result in threats or battery. Threats and violence against EMS providers are a growing issue, and giving district attorneys the proper tools and clear laws to ensure all first responders and health care providers are safe, is in our best interest.

AB-905 will now await final action in the Senate in March.

“At a time when many EMS departments are struggling with limited resources, we must provide them with the tools and flexibility they need to serve their communities,” said Sen. Marklein. “Allowing municipalities to collaborate regionally will help reduce duplication, control costs, and ensure residents across the state

continue to receive critical care.

I am also proud to support legislation that protects our health care workers, no matter where they serve. EMS providers are often placed in difficult situations with combative or upset patients. This bill ensures they have the protections they need while delivering care in the field.”

Senate Bill 181 (SB-181) also cleared its final legislative hurdle, passing the State Assembly. SB-181 will provide local municipalities with an option to collaborate or consolidate resources by creating a “regional emergency medical services district.” A regional EMS system would be made up of 8 municipalities or more, or 232 square miles or more. Each community in the district would be able to use a levy limit exemption of CPI+2% if a referendum passed in the district as a whole. Senate Bill 181 will now head to Governor Evers’ desk for signature.

“EMS providers across Wisconsin are facing significant issues with funding and staffing, which is leading to problems with access or lack of coverage for many communities. These challenges are negatively impacting EMS providers in urban and rural areas alike, so it is critical we continue to provide as many tools as we can so they can be successful,” said Rep. Kurtz.

“I am pleased this legislation has received broad bipartisan support and look forward to Governor Evers signing both bills into law.”