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On Healthcare, Evers' Calls for Bipartisanship Ring Hollow Yet Again

On Wednesday, Governor Evers vetoed Assembly Bill 76. This bill had received bipartisan support and would have reduced the number of hours required for Certified Nursing Assistant certification in Wisconsin to 75, down from 120. This 75 hour requirement would have brought Wisconsin in line with neighboring states and federal guidelines.

As a former nurse, I know how important CNAs are for quality healthcare. These are the people who care for our friends and loved ones every day. Their jobs can be thankless. Many of them pass on higher paying jobs because of their passion for care. With low unemployment, rising wages in our state, and an aging population, the need for passionate CNAs has never been higher. Our state should welcome those who want to provide care instead of putting arbitrary restrictions on who can do so.

This reduced hour requirement would have been especially helpful to the healthcare providers in my district, which borders Minnesota. CNAs working in Minnesota only need 75 hours for CNA certification, while certification in Wisconsin requires an additional 45 hours. This additional training limits efforts to recruit CNAs to our area. The healthcare professionals in my district all talk about the shortage of CNAs and the difficulty of recruiting CNAs. This legislation would remove this barrier of entry for Minnesota CNAs that want to come and work in Wisconsin, and it would incentive Wisconsin residents interested in becoming CNAs to stay in the state.

I recognize that this issue is a complicated one. While this legislation would not have solved all of Northwest Wisconsin's healthcare issues, it would have been one step in a series of long-term solutions. In a time of divided government, apparently even small steps forward are too much to ask of our Governor.

I will be pushing my Assembly colleagues who voted for this bill, both Republicans and Democrats, to seek an override of the Governor's veto. In the past, I have called for bipartisan efforts to address our healthcare issues. While the Governor's calls for similar bipartisanship ring hollow, I am confident that our Assembly body can rise above these partisan games and come together for the good of our state.