



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Democratic Assembly Mental Health Committee Members: Statement on Suicide Prevention Bills

MADISON - Today, Assembly Bill 193 and Assembly Bill 210 passed through the Assembly Committee on Mental Health. AB 193 requires the Department of Health Services (DHS) to provide grants to provide training for firearm retailer and firearm range staff on how to recognize a person that may be considering suicide, provide suicide prevention materials for distribution at a firearm retailer or range, or to provide voluntary, temporary firearm storage. AB 21 requires DHS to provide grants to organizations and local and tribal governments for suicide prevention programming. State Representative Robyn Vining (D-Wauwatosa), Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo), Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee), and Rep. Supreme Moore Omokunde (D-Milwaukee) issued the following statement:

“The need for violence prevention legislation and suicide prevention in Wisconsin is significant. Suicide is the 9th leading cause of death in Wisconsin. Wisconsinites are desperate for action on this issue and these investments in suicide prevention are a step in the right direction. We are calling on our legislative colleagues to continue this fight and support the critical investments in mental healthcare, violence prevention, suicide prevention, and gun violence prevention in Governor Evers’ proposed budget. Gov. Evers’ budget empowers these bills -- without these budget provisions, the bills are not as effective as we need them to be.

“Governor Evers’ proposals include violence intervention and prevention grants, as well as universal background checks for firearm purchases and Extreme Risk Prevention Orders (ERPO), which are essential to reduce and prevent violence and suicides in Wisconsin. The proposed budget also includes critical provisions such as \$2 million GPR annually for free and charitable clinics, \$2 million GPR for community health center grants, an increase of \$22.5 million GPR for school mental health categorical aid, \$7 million GPR for school based mental health collaboration grants as well as mental health funding for university students, farmers, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and veterans.

“As Wisconsin emerges from the pandemic facing a statewide mental health crisis, the call is to the state legislature to meet the needs of the state with appropriate funding, policy, and initiatives. The Governor’s Bounceback Budget is a strong effort in the right direction that provides the framework to empower this legislation we are passing through committee today. However, without this funding, these initiatives, and legislative framework of the ERPO legislation, the bills passing through committee today will not be as effective as we need them to assist families and save Wisconsinites’ lives.”

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