

GOVERNOR EVERS VETOES CNA SHORTAGE RELIEF LEGISLATION

Earlier this week, Governor Tony Evers vetoed important legislation that would have benefited the residents of skilled nursing facilities. As chairman of the Assembly Committee on Aging and Long Term Care, our committee passed Assembly Bill 76, which was aimed at reducing the shortage of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), the health care professionals who directly provide care for our loved ones.

Specifically, AB 76 aligns the state's required instructional hours for CNAs with the federal training standards followed by a number of other states, including our neighboring states. AB 76 was introduced with bipartisan support, advanced through committee on a bipartisan vote, and passed in both houses of the legislature on a bipartisan basis. Not only does the bill reduce the time and cost for certification of CNAs, but it also helps to address the workforce shortage that is affecting the quality of care and tying the hands of our long-term care facilities and providers.

The need for this bill is statewide. It is especially important in the legislative districts that border Minnesota, Michigan, and Iowa, which are represented by both Democrats and Republicans. Current law prevents CNAs who live in these border states from being eligible to work in Wisconsin, further exacerbating the workforce shortage.

I personally expressed my disappointment to Governor Evers about his decision to veto AB 76. My brief discussion with the governor began with him needing a refresher on the bill he had vetoed the day before. When I explained the need for this legislation and the problems it sought to address, he agreed that the nursing shortage is something that needs to be worked on. I walked away from the conversation even more perplexed as to why the governor vetoed this important piece of legislation.

State Representative Rick Gundrum
58th Assembly District
Slinger, WI