



JESSE KREMER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 59TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

*Testimony before the Senate Committee on Revenue, Financial Institutions and Rural Issues
State Representative Jesse Kremer
June 7, 2017*

Good morning,

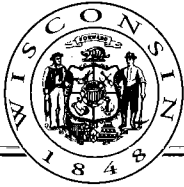
Thank you committee members, and especially you, Chairman Marklein, for holding a hearing on this bill within our "Rural Fire & EMS Reforms" package.

Senate Bill 238 is one of several ideas that were discussed and vetted in the 2016 Legislative Council Study Committee on Volunteer Firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician Shortages. As the vice chair of that committee, I am pleased to introduce this proposal that reforms essential Emergency Medical Services (EMS) funding without the need for an increase in taxpayer support.

The Emergency Medical Services Financial Assistance Program, or FAP, is a product of 1989 Act 102 to provide nearly \$2 million in annual funding to ambulance services that provide first-in 9-1-1 patient transport ambulance response to a particular geographic area. This is the only state funding that EMS providers receive.

Under current law, FAP dollars must be used exclusively for EMT Basic initial or refresher training, but can be escrowed from year to year and used to assist new or existing EMT Basic staff. This bill, which was included in Governor Walker's budget proposal, will allow even more rural services to utilize FAP for the purpose of training and recertifying lower level EMR, or Emergency Medical Responder/First Responder staff. It should be noted that many agencies with EMT Basics are also staffed with EMRs. This flexibility will not only alleviate cumbersome regulations on local EMS administrators to ensure that state dollars are only used for one type of lower level EMS responder, but also allow additional rural EMS services to access the funds.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify this morning and I encourage you to support Senate Bill 238.



State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Date: June 7, 2017

To: Senate Committee on Revenue, Financial Institutions and Rural Issues

From: Senator Sheila Harsdorf

RE: Senate Bill 238 relating to funding for first responder and emergency medical technician training and certification

Dear Chair Marklein and Committee Members:

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 238 which allows the Department of Health Services (DHS) to pay for first responder training and examinations.

Currently, through the Emergency Medical Services – Funding Assistance Program (EMS-FAP) at DHS, funds are available for volunteer fire departments, ambulance services that are public agencies, and nonprofit corporations with funding for certain qualifying expenses. These expenses include purchases of ambulance vehicles, equipment, supplies and training for EMT-basic level personnel. SB 238 would expand the use of these funds for training or continuing education for first responders. Additionally, this bill will allow an ambulance service provider to escrow any unused funds in the year it is distributed for use in subsequent years.

Our volunteer EMT and fire departments are dedicated to the communities they serve, often with limited resources. SB 238 will go a long way to ease some of the cost burdens that many first responders and EMTs bare and help with the retention and recruitment for service providers as well as giving some stability from year to year.

I urge your support and prompt action for this legislation. Thank you! I would welcome the opportunity to answer questions.

Allenton Vol. Fire Department, Inc.

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June 6, 2017

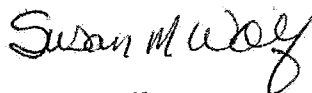
To Whom It May Concern;

This letter is to offer my support of the Senate Bill 238 that is being discussed. In the State of Wisconsin and really across our country more often we are seeing people have multiple different responsibilities and less time to do the things that they used to do to support our communities. As a result, our communities that provide fire and emergency medical services protection as volunteers are having an increasingly difficult time recruiting and retaining members. This leaves these services with fewer staff providing 24-hour coverage in their communities. As a result, many rural services are resorting to creative ways to increase staffing rosters. One of the ways that this is being done is to allow emergency medical responders along with emergency medical technicians to staff ambulances if services put this in their operational plan. This allows for services to have more members trained and reduces the service burden on the fewer numbers of emergency medical technicians. This staffing change is crucial to allowing services to provide care to their communities as they have in the past with volunteerism.

Senate Bill 238 proposes expanding the funding by the Department of Health Services to include paying for first responder training and examination. This change will assist rural services in providing training for several levels of care and ease the financial burden on small rural services struggling to recruit, train and retain personnel. As a small department located in a small farming community, we have seen our 911 call volumes increase in the past year and are at the lowest number of personnel serving our community in over 7 years. This spring we sent 8 members to first responder training to ease this burden of providing 24-hour staffing coverage by increasing the number of trained responders. This is money that is not reimbursed under current Wisconsin State law, but when senate bill 238 would pass, it will allow the Department of Health Services to reimburse our department for the expenses of training and certifying staff at the first responder level along with the emergency medical technician level.

Thank you for considering this senate bill which will greatly benefit all Wisconsin ambulance services.

Sincerely,



Susan M Wolf

Deputy Chief of EMS Operations
Allenton Volunteer Fire Department
P.O. Box 107
Allenton, WI 53002

Volunteering

Quality Education and Emergency Services

to Our Community



BADGER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

TO: Senate Committee on Revenue, Financial Institutions, and Rural Issues
FROM: Ronald J. Naab, President
DATE: 6 June 2017
REFERENCE: 2017/SB-238

As president of the Badger Firefighters Association, we would like to express our support of 2017/SB-238 relating to the Department of Health Services to assist to pay for First Responder Training and Examinations in addition to the current policy of for Emergency Medical Technician Training and Examinations.

In addition, we are very appreciative that this legislation will allow these agencies to pay for training required for individuals to be certified or re-certify as a first responder or emergency medical technician at any level of training.

This will help many of our rural and semi-rural departments maintain their presence assisting others that are having medical emergencies.

We ask you to vote in favor of this important legislation to help all of our Wisconsin citizens stay safe and healthy. Our staffing of responders to emergencies as at an all-time low level and it is hoped that this legislation will help those of us in rural and semi-rural areas maintain sufficient and effective responding staffs.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald J. Naab".

Ronald J. Naab
President