
State of Wisconsin
Office of the Governor

March 31, 2022

The Honorable, the Senate:

I am vetoing **Senate Bill 89** in its entirety.

This bill would prohibit the Department of Health Services from requiring an applicant who is applying for certification as an emergency medical responder to register with or take the examination of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT), effectively allowing an emergency medical responder to bypass this examination.

Our emergency medical responders are doing critically important work in our communities. I support making meaningful, long-term investments in our healthcare workers and infrastructure, including increasing shared revenue, which can help support local investments in emergency medical services across our state. Our emergency medical service providers have faced challenges over the course of the last decade. Since 2011, state aid to communities has gone down by more than nine percent, while public safety costs have increased more than 16 percent. At the same time, our state relies on nearly 800 emergency medical service providers, and more than half are either operated exclusively by volunteers or through a combination of volunteers and paid staff. This work is critically important for healthcare access, especially in our rural communities.

As our state has long faced workforce challenges that preceded the pandemic, and now has historically low levels of unemployment and the fewest number of people unemployed ever in state history, it has grown increasingly difficult to find new volunteers and paid employees to step into these important roles. Rising costs, coupled with the lack of available staffing, have forced some communities to make cuts or drastically scale back public safety efforts, including emergency medical services.

I was proud during my State of the State address to announce we are investing nearly \$30 million into supporting emergency medical services and service providers across our state. This investment includes \$20 million that will go to emergency medical service providers across the state for whatever help they need the most, whether it is increasing staffing support, getting first responders more training, or purchasing an ambulance, medical equipment, or supplies. I also am investing \$130 million into finding innovative, community-based solutions to our state's longstanding workforce challenges that will help support our talented workforce while bringing more talented workers to Wisconsin.

While we can and must do more to support our emergency medical service and responders by finding sustainable, long-term solutions to these challenges to ensure these services are available in communities across our state, I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to potentially lowering statewide educational qualifications needed to be certified as an emergency medical responder in Wisconsin. These are provisions in this bill I am open to considering. Specifically, I support ensuring someone can satisfy emergency medical responder certification requirements by demonstrating they have military service training, education, or experience that is substantially equivalent to the course required for emergency medical responder certification. This effort could help further ensure our veterans entering our workforce after their service face fewer barriers to finding work. However, I cannot support other provisions in this legislation that I am concerned would have negative, long-term effects on patient care by lowering educational and training qualifications.

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor