



State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Date: February 3, 2016

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Senator Sheila Harsdorf

RE: Senate Bill 520 and Senate Bill 522 – Changes to Medical Examining Board and Opioid Treatment Programs

Dear Chair Vukmir and Committee Members:

Thank you for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 520 (SB 520) and Senate Bill 522 (SB 522.)

These bills are a continuation of the HOPE legislation that seeks to address the growing heroin epidemic in our state. We know that individuals often fall prey to substance abuse given the availability and accessibility of prescription drugs and other medications.

SB 520: This bill seeks to make changes to the authority of the Medical Examining Board (MEB) and allows the MEB, Podiatry Affiliated Credentialing Board, the Board of Nursing, the Dentistry Examining Board, and the Optometry Examining Board to issue guidelines regarding best practices in prescribing controlled substances.

SB 522: This bill seeks to make changes to opioid treatment systems by more closely aligning program regulations with federal law. This will remove barriers currently in place that make it difficult for these programs to expand.

This legislation seeks to move Wisconsin another step forward in the fight against drug addiction. I am pleased this legislation has received broad bipartisan support and urge your passage of SB 520 and SB 522.



John Nygren

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

HOPE Agenda Testimony
State Rep. John Nygren
February 3, 2016

Thank you Chair Vukmir and members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for holding a public hearing on Senate Bills 520 and 522.

These pieces of legislation are an extension of the HOPE Agenda (Heroin, Opioid Prevention and Education). Our goal with these proposals is to continue to address what many people believe to be the root of our state's heroin problem: prescription drug abuse and addiction. Studies show that, in many cases, heroin addiction begins with an addiction to prescription painkillers. Whether these medications are obtained legally or not, we need to do our best to curtail the illegal use of these dangerous substances. It is for this reason that I am offering additional HOPE Agenda bills that are aimed at fighting prescription drug abuse in Wisconsin.

The following are summaries of each of the two bills:

SB522: Currently, state law relating to opioid treatment programs is much more highly regulated than federal law. Wisconsin's high level of regulation has inhibited treatment programs from being able to expand. This bill streamlines aspects of state law to align certain opioid treatment program regulations with federal law.

SB520: This bill will allow the Medical Examining Board (MEB), the Board of Nursing, the Dentistry Examining Board, and the Optometry Examining Board to issue guidelines regarding best practices in prescribing controlled substances.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before your committee today on these important pieces of legislation and welcome any questions you may have at this time.