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[Date][Draft/2]

Dr. Morna Foy, President  
Wisconsin Technical College System  
4622 University Avenue  
P.O. Box 7874  
Madison, WI 53707-7874

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association, Inc.  
22 N. Carroll Street, Suite 103  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Dr. Foy and the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association:

The Joint Legislative Council's Study Committee on Volunteer Firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Shortages was created by the Joint Legislative Council and met five times between July and November of 2016.

The study committee reported that it heard testimony about barriers in accessing firefighter and EMT training, particularly in rural areas of Wisconsin. Based on that testimony, the study committee made the following recommendations:

- That the technical colleges maximize the amount of firefighter and emergency medical services (EMS) training offered online. In particular, the committee recommends that the district colleges continue to seek opportunities to expand online fire service and EMS training offerings based on local demand and broadband availability.
- That, in rural areas, the highest number of course hours that is practical be offered on site at local fire departments and EMS providers. In particular, the committee recommends that, working with local fire service and EMS providers, the district colleges identify fire departments and EMS providers willing to host fire and emergency services training for multiple departments and providers.
- That district colleges improve coordination and communications with local fire departments and EMS providers about course offerings. In particular, the committee recommends that, working with local fire departments and EMS providers, the district

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colleges identify the most effective methods of providing notice to departments, providers, and their members of scheduled training courses and online training opportunities.

- That the technical colleges address disparities between the number of students who successfully complete the required coursework and the number of students who pass the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) exams, as well as disparities between NREMT examination passage rates at the different district colleges. In particular, the committee recommends that the technical colleges review course curriculums to identify ways to improve NREMT passage rates and ensure that the coursework adequately prepares students in the standards that will be examined.

The study committee noted that it appreciates the Wisconsin Technical Colleges' commitment to providing training programs for firefighters and EMS personnel. The readiness of well-trained firefighters and EMS personnel is essential for the health and welfare of all Wisconsin residents.

For your information, a list of committee members is enclosed with this letter. The study committee's charge is as follows:

The Study Committee is directed to examine issues related to the shortage of volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) in the state, particularly in rural areas, and propose measures to address the shortage. Specifically, the Study Committee shall study all of the following: (a) the magnitude of volunteer shortages, the areas of the state most affected, and the potential impact of shortages on public health and safety and economic development; (b) whether current training and continuing education requirements contribute to the shortage; (c) relationships between full-time and volunteer emergency response departments and the impact that the shortage of volunteers has on nonvolunteer departments in neighboring communities; and (d) whether the creation of organizations, particularly in rural areas, may help address the shortage. The committee shall develop legislative options to meet the needs of full time and volunteer fire departments, including proposals designed to increase the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters throughout the state.

Thank you for your full consideration of these recommendations from the Study Committee on Volunteer Firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician Shortages.

Sincerely,

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Senator Mary Lazich, Co-Chair  
Joint Legislative Council

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Representative Joan Ballweg, Co-Chair  
Joint Legislative Council

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Enclosure