



Media Release

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Rep. Shankland: Statement on Partial Veto of SVP Placement Bill

MADISON – This morning, Governor Walker partially vetoed Assembly Bill 539, relating to the placements of Sexually Violent Persons (SVPs). The original bill, which was modeled after a budget motion authored by Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point), gives local leaders placement authority for SVPs, while requiring that SVPs are placed in their home counties for supervised release. The original bill would have ended the shipment of SVPs to other counties without threatening the program’s constitutionality.

Governor Walker’s partial veto limits local leaders’ placement decisions and keeps restrictions in place that have made it impossible for many SVPs to be placed in their home counties, causing them to be shipped to other counties. With the partial veto, Assembly Bill 539 both requires SVPs to be released in their home counties and maintains these residency restrictions. It is unclear how the new law will be enforced without creating a constitutional crisis for the entire program.

In response, Rep. Shankland released the following statement:

“My first priority is to try to leverage this new law to stop the pending SVP placement in the Town of Alban. While the timeline of the law is somewhat vague, there is reason for optimism for the Alban community, and I am pleased that a year of working across the aisle has created results.

“That said, I’m disappointed that Governor Walker put politics before policy today with his partial veto. Assembly Bill 539 was drafted with broad input from stakeholders – including law enforcement, district attorneys, and public defenders – and received bipartisan support in the legislature. There is no reason to tamper with a bill that so many stakeholders support and so many families have hoped for.

“Under Governor Walker’s veto, Portage County will not be able to pursue the option suggested by Sheriff Mike Lukas, which is to place SVPs directly next to the county jail. And especially troubling are the consequences that this new law could create for the SVP supervised release program down the road. This partial veto has put the entire program at risk of a court finding it unconstitutional, which would lead to SVPs being released onto the street sooner without state supervision.

“Governor Walker had the opportunity to solve the state-wide SVP problem today, but instead his actions will create more problems. I am committed to working on a solution until SVPs no longer pose a threat to Portage County families.”

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