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Assembly Misses Opportunity on Mental Health

Madison – This afternoon, the Wisconsin State Assembly met to vote on a number of bills, including some regarding mental health. As ranking member on the Assembly Committee on Mental Health, Representative Dave Considine (D-Baraboo) offered the following statement:

“Today, the Assembly passed Assembly Bill 644. This bill expands mental health resources, which is sorely needed. Unfortunately, it seems that on the floor of the Assembly we are given the choice to vote for a crumb or slice of bread when we need to vote for the full loaf of bread.

“Assembly Bill 644 creates a school-based mental health consultation program in Outagamie County. I support giving mental health consultation resources to schools in Outagamie County. However, students across our state are hurting. That is why today, my colleagues and I offered two amendments to Assembly Bill 644 which would allow students across the state to access needed mental health resources. One of the amendments would have appropriated funds so that any Wisconsin school could have the funding to hire and retain pupil service staff such as school social workers, psychologists, and nurses. Unfortunately, our amendments were rejected.

“I believe every Representative in the Assembly wants to provide support for our students. However, not everyone understands that funding our mental health care systems costs money. Investing in student mental health is a priority for me, which is why I voted for this bill. But it is important to invest in each student’s mental health, not just for students in one county. Schools are begging for assistance with student mental health support. Students and staff are needing this more than ever before. It is our duty to let our local school districts decide what works for them, and give them the resources to implement those mental health supports. Let’s help our schools and students cope with the severe mental health crisis we’re seeing across Wisconsin. Let’s vote for the full loaf and fund mental health programs in all of Wisconsin’s schools.

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