

PRESS RELEASE

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Sens. Testin and Nass, Reps. Pronschinske and Mursau Introduce B.R.A.V.E. Act *Proposal Would Aid in Attraction and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Medical Personnel*

Madison, WI – On Tuesday, Legislators from all corners of Wisconsin came together to introduce the B.R.A.V.E. Act - which stands for Beginning Retention and Attraction for Volunteer Emergency personnel. Senators Patrick Testin (Stevens Point) and Steve Nass (Whitewater) joined Representatives. Treig Pronschinske (Mondovi) and Jeff Mursau (Crivitz) to author the bill which creates three refundable tax credits to help attract and retain volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel.

“This bill is a combination of two bills – one that was introduced by Rep. Mursau and I and another put forward by Rep. Pronschinske and Sen. Nass,” said Sen. Testin. “By working together, we’ve created a stronger bill that will help bring in new volunteer firefighters and emergency personnel, while supporting those already serving – the heroes next door.”

According to recent statistics from the U.S. Fire Administration, 92.5% of Wisconsin’s fire departments are either entirely volunteer or mostly volunteer. A significant amount of emergency medical personnel are volunteer as well.

“When we dial 911 we expect a response in minutes,” said Rep. Pronschinske. “As a volunteer firefighter, I understand the role we play in providing a quick response while saving lives and property. Wisconsin cannot afford to ignore these contributions and sacrifices any longer.”

The average age of volunteer firefighters has increased markedly over the past two decades, and departments are finding it difficult to recruit new volunteers. There are several reasons for this shift, including declining rural populations, increased training requirements, and more hours spent at full-time jobs.

“The communities in rural districts like the one that I represent have always counted on volunteers,” said Rep. Mursau. “This bill will help ensure that talented men and women continue to serve their neighbors as firefighters or EMTs.”

“As a conservative, I believe that the principal role of government is to ensure public safety,” said Sen. Nass. “This bill works to make sure all communities have services they can count on when an emergency strikes.”

The bill is currently circulating for co-sponsorship.

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