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League of Women Voters of WI Support for AB904 and SB889

The League of Women Voters Wisconsin supports AB904/SB889 as a very small step in the right direction.

The purpose of 911 Good Samaritan Laws is to save lives and remove any hesitation for people to call 911. AB904/SB889 partly accomplishes that by ensuring 911 callers who are under supervision will not be revoked.

However, we are concerned that these bills offer very limited protections and risk creating worse situations for overdose survivors because of forced treatment and/or jail.

Survivors who are on supervision only have immunity from revocation IF they complete a treatment program or go to jail for no less than 15 days. Overdose survivors who are not on supervision also face forced treatment to comply with deferred prosecution requirements.

The realities of forced treatment and jail include:

- Treatment is not readily available nor affordable in many Wisconsin counties. The bills do not clarify that treatment facilities must provide evidence-based care.
- Overdose survivors who are jailed may not receive evidence-based treatment. Being released after 15 or more days puts those survivors at extremely high risk for another overdose if they use substances after a period of abstinence.
- Jail and forced treatment can cause job loss and lead to further life disruptions. People are removed from stable influences such as family, pets, income to support their children and other family members.