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Brown Grades Doyle's Homeland Security Council "Incomplete"
Council Lacks Representation from Local Governments and Fire Services

(Madison) In a letter today, Senator Brown applauded Governor Doyle's creation of the Homeland Security Council, but expressed concern that it failed to incorporate the perspective of the majority of first responders. The council lacks representation from local units of government and the fire services. Doyle this week announced the creation of a Governor's Homeland Security Council to coordinate Wisconsin's efforts to prevent and respond to potential terrorist attacks.

"Missing valuable input from local units of government and representatives from the fire services handicaps the Council's ability to develop response strategies," Senator Brown wrote. "As a former fire chief, I can assure you that coordinating the efforts of state and local agencies by including only state officials at the table will not work. If the goal is to coordinate efforts, the perspectives and experience of local governments must be involved."

The Council is also charged with making recommendations to the Governor and local governments on the additional steps needed to further enhance Wisconsin's homeland security. "To think officials at the state level have all the answers in enhancing Wisconsin's homeland security is shortsighted," Brown commented. "In order to keep Wisconsin safe, we must have the insight of the people who have been keeping our communities safe since well before 9/11—local fire responders."

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The Council has also been directed to coordinate law enforcement and intelligence gathering efforts of local and state agencies. The membership of the Council, which is skewed towards law enforcement, exemplifies how the fire services take a back seat at the state level. “Ensuring that intelligence information gets to **all** people on the front line is crucial, regardless of what the pecking order may be at the state level,” Brown asserted. “Failing to recognize that the fire services also need information to appropriately respond cripples the council’s ability to design effective response strategies. To truly enhance homeland security in Wisconsin, fire services need a voice at the state level.”

Senator Brown urged Governor Doyle to enhance the membership of the Governor’s Homeland Security Council by including the valuable insight of first responders, to ensure Wisconsin’s homeland security.