

Assembly sends bill on correctional child abuse reporting to Walker's desk

Posted on Wednesday, May 10, 2017

The state Assembly today passed a bill requiring juvenile correctional officers to report any child abuse they see while on the job, sending the bill to Gov. Scott Walker's desk.

The bipartisan bill follows lawsuits and a federal investigation into allegations of mistreatment at the state's Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake juvenile correctional facilities. The bill, which passed on a voice vote, was co-authored by Rep. Joel Kleefisch, R-Oconomowoc, and Sen. LaTonya Johnson, D-Milwaukee.

Kleefisch said at a news conference ahead of today's session it "only makes sense" to add juvenile correctional officers to the list of professions such as teachers and psychologists that need to report possible child abuse cases.

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos called it a "great bill" and said there could be more legislation addressing those issues, though he said Walker's Department of Corrections is "doing a good job."

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The chamber, which is now debating several bills making changes to public assistance programs, also passed several other bills in rapid succession this afternoon, including:

*SB 148, a bill that would allow delivery robots to travel on sidewalks and in crosswalks. The bill passed the Senate already and now heads to Walker's desk for his signature.

*SB 51, which makes several technical changes relating to the state's tax incremental financing statute. That bill is also heading to Walker's desk.

*AB 98, which clarifies procedures for those who have a court-ordered requirement that they can only drive cars with ignition interlock devices. The bill looks to correct a loophole that currently prevents authorities from citing some people with driving without a device.

*and AB 170, which ensures bus shelters on state trunk highways can have advertisements.