

# Rep. Thiesfeldt: Introduces ‘Teacher Protection Act’

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Madison – Today, Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt (R – Fond du Lac) officially released legislation aimed at protecting teachers and restoring discipline in classrooms, also known as the “Teacher Protection Act.” This legislation was in direct response to the comprehensive report by Dan O’Donnell, “Blood on the Blackboard” that shared horror story after horror story of teachers’ physical assaults and subsequent issues.

Rep. Thiesfeldt stated, “School safety is not just for kids—it is vital for teachers and staff as well. While I wish it were not necessary to bring legislation forward on this issue, we must bring this serious discussion to the light of day on how we can better protect our teachers. We all know teachers who can relate personal stories of threats and physical assaults from students. Too many of our teachers operate daily in an environment where violence and threats of violence from students are all too common, and students go with little or no disciplinary action from school administration.”

In the most recent national data (US Dept. of Ed.) available broken down by state, 1/4 of all Wisconsin teachers reported experiencing either a physical attack (11.3%) or being threatened with injury (13.7%) by a student in the previous 12 months. The former figure was worst in the nation; combined data placed our state 3rd worst. Nationwide, using combined data, 1 in 6 teachers report the same.

Thiesfeldt continued, “Teachers are responsible for providing an appropriate learning atmosphere within their classroom. Logical disciplinary techniques have been set aside to respond to the pressure applied by misguided federal agencies to

reduce suspensions and expulsions.”

In a January 2014 letter to schools nationwide, the US Depts. of Education and Justice made it clear that schools with a record of racial or ethnic disparities in disciplinary data could face a federal investigation. Many schools simply stopped expulsions and suspensions.

Thiesfeldt continued, “Under this bill, most schools would see little change since they already do fine work protecting our teachers. The legislation provides common sense policies that can help restore classroom discipline, require police involvement with serious issues like physical assaults, and inform teachers of potential issues with pupils.”

The draft legislation and the memo to colleagues can be accessed [here](#) (memo) and [here](#) (legislation). It includes eleven specific initiatives and was developed with extensive input of law enforcement, education groups, and other stakeholders.

“We all want our students to attend school each day in a positive learning environment. This is not possible when teachers do not feel safe or supported in the performance of basic disciplinary duties. If you feel strongly about supporting our teachers, I ask our citizens to contact their State Representatives and State Senators to encourage them to support and cosponsor this legislation. It is time to put teachers back in control of the classroom,” concluded Thiesfeldt.