

AG Schimel: Applauds Wisconsin Assembly for passage of child neglect bill

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MADISON, Wis. – Today, legislation arming prosecutors with additional tools to fight child neglect was passed by the Wisconsin State Assembly.

“I sincerely thank Rep. Horlacher for his tireless advocacy for the children of Wisconsin, and I am grateful for the Wisconsin State Assembly’s support for this legislation,” said Attorney General Schimel “As a criminal prosecutor for almost three decades, I have seen that this solution is long overdue. Under this bill, prosecutors will be able to charge long-term child neglect and we will be able to achieve justice for child victims. With bipartisan support, we got this legislation done and we got it done right for the children of this state.”

By setting a criminal negligence standard, Assembly Bill 355 offers greater protection for neglected children, especially those suffering from emotional harm, or those whose neglect results in sexual assault, being trafficked for sex, and other horrific acts.

“I am extremely grateful for the input and energy by child advocates, law enforcement, and community members, as well as Attorney General Schimel and Senator Cowles,” said Rep. Cody Horlacher (R-Mukwonago). “I have made the protection of our most vulnerable a top priority, and I worked to make sure our community standards are reflected in this legislation.”

The bill also tackles the problem of chronic neglect by allowing prosecutors to charge repeated acts of neglect committed against the same child. The change is similar to what exists for repeated acts of sexual assault or physical abuse. Often,

children cannot identify specific dates or times when acts of sexual abuse were committed against them. Crimes of child neglect often follow that same pattern.

Finally, the bill will create a Drug Endangered Child component within the neglect law. In doing so, Wisconsin joins the growing list of states that support such legislation. Protection from neglect resulting from the use, distribution, or manufacturing of controlled substances can now be better spread to the children in our communities.