

# Sen. Darling: Governor signs Darling bill to help get teens into shelters

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**Madison** – Homeless teens in Wisconsin will soon have a better chance to get off the streets. On Tuesday, Governor Tony Evers signed a bill authored by State Senator Alberta Darling that will allow 17-year-olds from broken homes or living on the streets to find shelter and a safe place to sleep. Senator Darling says her bill will help protect vulnerable children in our state.

“It is very sad so many kids in Wisconsin do not have parents who can provide for them,” Darling said, “We must do more to help these kids, and this new law will get kids off the streets and into a safe living space. Having a safe place to sleep will greatly increase the chances of that student finishing high school and may help protect them from sex traffickers.”

Currently, minors aren’t allowed to enter homeless shelters without an adult. The bill allows 17-year-olds who are homeless and don’t have a parent or guardian to get shelter. Senator Darling says too many Wisconsin kids don’t have parents available to provide for them.

“Kids need a safe place to sleep. DPI’s reports say there are nearly 2,300 Wisconsin kids who don’t have access to stable housing,” Darling said, “This new law removes a barrier for them to access shelters and transitional living programs.”

[According to the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse](#), one out of every three homeless teens is recruited for sex trafficking within 48 hours of leaving home. Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania report that more than two-thirds of homeless females say they were solicited for paid sex. In a report from the National Institute of Justice, nearly 75% of underage survivors of sex trafficking identified housing as a major area of need. This bill will help get kids off the street and away from the purview of potential traffickers.

Senator Darling represents portions of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha Counties.