

Sen. Jacques: Correctional system safety proposal passes state Senate

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MADISON – The Wisconsin State Senate voted unanimously yesterday afternoon to approve Senator André Jacques's (R – De Pere) corrections contraband legislation, SB 70, to help crack down on unsafe prison conditions.

"This common-sense legislation closes the current contraband loophole, identified by corrections officers, which endangers both corrections employees and inmates," Jacques said.

Under current law, it is illegal to smuggle a prohibited item into a prison and distribute it to someone else, but only a simple rules violation for someone found in possession of the prohibited items. These items are often very dangerous in a corrections setting, and actual confiscated items were displayed or discussed by the Outagamie County Sheriff's Department Administrator, Capt. Dave Kiesner, when he testified at the Senate and Assembly hearings on the legislation. The items included a handcuff key, metal objects that were easily converted into weapons, flammable liquids, and cellphones that could be used by inmates to direct criminal activity from behind bars.

The legislation previously passed the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee on a unanimous, bi-partisan 5-0 vote and now heads to the Assembly, where its identical Assembly companion bill has already received a public hearing.

Sen. André Jacques represents Northeast Wisconsin's First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and

Outagamie counties.