

Sen. Taylor: Sexual contact by law enforcement officer bill receives diverse support

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Contact:

Michelle Bryant (608) 266-5810

MADISON – On Thursday, Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) testified at a public hearing of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety for AB 171/SB 104, relating to sexual contact by a law enforcement officer with a person in his or her custody and providing a penalty. Taylor originally introduced the legislation last session after learning about the story of Anna Chambers.

In 2017, Chambers accused two New York police officers of sexually assaulting her while she was in their custody. A rape kit collected the semen of detectives Eddie Martin and Richard Hall. The officers claimed that the sex was consensual. At the time, New York law nor Wisconsin made it illegal for a police officer to have sex with an individual in their custody.

Since that time, New York's law has changed. In Wisconsin, support for the bill has been bi-partisan, receiving backing from law enforcement agencies and the community. After the hearing, Taylor released the following statement:

“Bottom line, you can not consent to sexual contact with a law enforcement officer, while in their custody. There is an inherent imbalance of power in that situation. Wisconsin law doesn't currently allow it for correctional officers or parole agents, police officers should be subject to the same laws.”

“I am thankful for the law enforcement agencies that agreed with the legislation

and my colleagues that have helped to champion its merits. The bill will help protect everyone involved, officers and detainees. It should be a no-brainer and quite frankly, I was surprised to learn at the time of Chambers' assault, this loophole existed in 35 states."