

Rep. Allen: You're on candid camera

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The Wisconsin State Assembly on Wednesday passed Senate Bill (SB) 247, outlining uses of surveillance systems, including cameras, during the sale of property.

Smart home devices from Google, Amazon, Apple, Facebook and others have proliferated over the last decade, and are projected to rise. Market research firm IDC projects that over 1.6 billion smart home devices will ship in 2023 alone, almost tripling from 2018.

“With technology today, we should assume that we may be on camera at any time,” said Rep. Allen.

The legislation passed Wednesday strikes a balance between the property rights of home sellers and privacy rights of potential home buyers. The bill specified that property owners may use surveillance devices without notification or permission, for example, during an open house. Surveillance is not permitted in bathrooms or washrooms.

“When viewing properties for sale, buyers should assume that they are being recorded,” advises Rep. Allen, “you don’t want to say things that may be offensive and you don’t want to weaken your negotiating position.”

Cori Lamont, Senior Director of Legal and Public Affairs for the Wisconsin Realtors Association, believes the clarification in state law will prove beneficial. “SB 247 is a big win for sellers, who will no longer have to question whether they can use surveillance to protect their safety and property during the sales process.”

SB 247 now goes to Governor Evers’ desk.