

Assembly passes bill requiring the national anthem be played at certain sporting events

Posted on Tuesday, May 11, 2021

The Assembly has passed a bill requiring the playing or singing of the national anthem at sporting events where at least some taxpayer money was used to finance the event facility.

Under the bill, which moved to the Senate after a 74-22 vote for passage, no sporting event may be held in a venue constructed at least in part with public money unless the event is preceded by the playing or singing of the national anthem.

Rep. Don Vruwink, D-Milton, said the bill would force those places to play the national anthem too frequently, which could erode the significance of the song.

“It doesn’t have the same sense of pride and meaning if we do that,” Vruwink said. “So I don’t want the national anthem to be disingenuous. I want people to think about the words and what is being said.”

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Rep. Lisa Subeck, D-Madison, slammed authors of the bill for failing to define which sporting events qualify under the bill. She said the bill is all about the overall message of supporting the national anthem without any actual thought on how it will take effect.

The bill’s author, Rep. Mike Kuglitsch, R-New Berlin, partially agreed with Subeck, saying the bill is a political message that both parties should get behind.

Rep. Donna Rozar, R-Marshfield, said the bill would help remind Wisconsinites they

live in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Rep. Christine Sinicki, D-Milwaukee, said she's concerned the bill requires Americans to do something they have the freedom not to do. But she added she supports the bill because she wants to see more respect towards the national anthem.

"You know it's a bill that has no teeth in it, but I'm gonna vote for it, probably to the surprise of a lot of my friends or constituents, because as I said, patriotism is something that is in you, it's not something we can force upon people," Sinicki said.