

Kerr campaign: Announces DPI policy reforms to combat child sex trafficking, abuse, and exploitation

Posted on Friday, Mar 26, 2021

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WAUSAU, WI - Parents, community leaders, and media are invited to hear State Superintendent Candidate Deb Kerr's policy plans to combat child sex trafficking, abuse, and exploitation. She will speak in Wausau, Wisconsin on Friday, March 26 at 10 am. Deb will also discuss plans to ensure an immediately available option for all children to receive in-person instruction. Deb will meet with media and community members at the 400 block park located at 401 N 3rd Street, Wausau, WI 54403.

Kerr said, "Child abuse and exploitation are severely underreported in Wisconsin. It's deplorable and I see an opportunity to train counselors and teachers to identify, report, and advocate for students who have fallen victim to predators and traffickers."

In 2019, there were nearly 100 [reports](#) of child trafficking in Wisconsin. Another report showed that there were 340 instances of child trafficking in Milwaukee County alone with a [quarter](#) of those victims going missing from foster or group homes. In Marathon County, there is a [consensus](#) amongst law enforcement that child trafficking is severely underreported. Wisconsin law enforcement [report](#) that forced virtual learning is exacerbating these concerning trends of abuse. Disturbingly, Wisconsin is becoming a known hub for child sex trafficking.

"DPI needs to be doing more. It should be our responsibility to keep kids safe. We need to be collaborating with local law enforcement and community organizations to combat this. Right now, combating child trafficking is a mere suggestion for DPI. That's not good enough for our kids. As state superintendent, I'll work, so every teacher, counselor, and administrator is fully trained and equipped to identify

trafficking and advocate for survivors of these horrendous crimes,” Kerr continued. “Forced virtual learning has made our kids more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, especially for internet crimes. We need to have an option for in-person instruction immediately available. We need kids to return to schools which are adequately equipped to combat all forms of abuse.”