

Sen. Jacque: Calls for override of Evers' veto of paddlewheel charity fundraisers

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DE PERE... State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere) today called on the State Legislature to override Gov. Evers' veto of paddlewheel raffle fundraisers by non-profit organizations, his second veto of the measure [in just over a year](#).

"Let's be clear: these organizations already have charitable gaming licenses," Sen. Jacque said. "I do not understand why Gov. Evers has it in for these groups. Surely the Governor has better things to do than making charity fundraising a crime."

Sen. Jacque (R-De Pere), who co-authored of the measure ([Senate Bill 170](#)) with State Rep. Dave Murphy (R- Greenville), said paddlewheel raffles are very popular and raise money for important causes throughout the state. However, charitable groups across Wisconsin may be unknowingly and unintentionally committing a felony-level offense under current law.

"Wisconsin's many sporting clubs, civic and veterans' organizations, churches, and numerous other non-profits throughout our state have fun and have supported many charitable causes through paddlewheels," Sen. Jacque said. Paddlewheels are frequently used for 'meat raffles,' a crowd favorite seen at events from church festivals to veteran's hall fish fries.

However, Sen. Jacque said groups who hold paddlewheel raffles at special events under their raffle license have been informed by Wisconsin's Department of Justice,

at the request of the Department of Administration, that they are fostering illegal gambling and are subject to up to a Class I Felony penalty.

“People are understandably shocked when they find out they may be committing a felony by trying to help others,” Sen. Jacque said. “Doing good in your community should not be a crime.”

Sen. Jacque previously authored legislation that was enacted to allow popular raffles such as plastic and rubber duck races at special events to lawfully operate under a Class B raffle license. The winner in the raffle or race must be determined by a “drawing” with all tickets having an “equal opportunity to win.”

“The legislature must override Gov. Evers’ veto and provide similar relief so Class B raffle licensees can run paddlewheel raffles without committing a felony,” Sen. Jacque said. “It makes no sense that you can drive across the border to Minnesota and play these popular games without fear of prosecution.”

Both Houses of the Legislature passed the bill with bi-partisan support, and the backing of numerous charitable groups. Similar legislation passed both chambers unanimously last session without any registered opposition at any prior point, but was vetoed by [Gov. Evers, who could not give a reason for his veto when questioned](#).

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.