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Sen. Jacque: Public safety legislation heads to governor

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MADISON, WI… State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere) has two more bills in his Public Safety Package on the way to Governor Evers' desk, initiatives that protect Wisconsin corrections agents and their families, and allow virtual court proceeding so the system runs more efficiently and brings justice to victims with fewer delays. Five other bills in the package were also passed by the State Assembly.

"The bills in this package are designed to support the law enforcement officers, staff, and court systems we rely on keep us safe," Sen. Jacque said. "We need to act now, as Wisconsin is seeing a significant increase in crime."

The following Public Safety Package bills are awaiting action by the Governor:

Senate Bill 100, co-authored with Rep. Michael Schraa (R-Oshkosh), would penalize intentional harm and threats to Department of Corrections (DOC) agents and their families, as well as Wisconsin's equivalent tribal officials.

Sen. Jacque said he introduced the measure after hearing from current and former probation and parole agents like Amanda Holz, whose family was threatened by an incarcerated individual on a probation hold.

"The individual said he knew where her one-year-old daughter attended daycare," Sen. Jacque said, adding, "Others received graphic written threats of promised violence toward their families or had weapons such as crossbows pointed at them by those they supervised. While threats to judges, police officers, district attorneys, or their family members carry a Class H felony, DOC agents are not afforded this same protection. This bill would remedy that dangerous inconsistency in the law."

Senate Bill 219**,** co-authored with Rep Jeremy Thiesfeldt (R-Fond du Lac), updates

current law to allow juvenile and adult criminal court cases to proceed via remote audiovisual and telecommunications technologies.

Sen. Jacque said that, while the need for these changes was magnified by the COVID-19, several states had already adopted more expansive use of technology for court appearances on a permanent basis even before the pandemic.

“These states recognize that, in addition to reducing transportation costs, using this technology will help the system operate more efficiently,” Sen. Jacque said. “For example, it makes no sense to keep an individual from entering a drug abuse treatment facility until they personally appear in an empty courtroom.”

The measures must now be signed by the Governor to become law.

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.