

# Sen. Jacque: Public safety legislation signed into law

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MADISON, WI... State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere) today had another bill in his Public Safety Package signed into law, an initiative allowing virtual court proceedings so the system runs more efficiently and brings justice to victims with fewer delays at lower cost.

“Remote court proceedings are another of the many tools that, while in use prior to Covid-19, became much more widely adopted due to changes in court operations during the pandemic,” Sen. Jacque said. “But it is important to note that several states had already adopted more expansive use of this technology for court appearances on a permanent basis without requiring an emergency order.”

Under prior law, any party in a juvenile court plea hearing could participate by telephone or other live audiovisual means, except for a juvenile who intends to admit the facts of a delinquency petition. This new law eliminates that exception, unless good cause to the contrary is shown.

“For example, juveniles who wish to make admissions and enter a treatment facility are currently precluded from doing so electronically, and have been personally appearing in empty courtrooms in some cases,” Sen. Jacque said. “This new law allows them to do so by virtual communications. “

The measure ([Senate Bill 219](#)), co-authored with Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt, also removes the limitation on criminal court proceedings subject to virtual proceedings, again provided there would be no negative impacts on the case. It will allow for defendants to enter pleas, accept plea deals, receive sentencing, deal with interstate detainer proceedings, and allow individuals to enter treatment more quickly.

“This legislation has received support from many stakeholders within Wisconsin’s court system, including the Wisconsin District Attorneys Association, Wisconsin Public Defenders Office, and numerous court and county officials,” Sen. Jacque said. “Incorporating available communications technology infrastructure to enhance court operations will reduce transportation costs and bring more efficiencies to the justice system.”

Two other bills in Sen. Jacque’s Public Safety Package await action by the Governor, including legislation that protects Wisconsin corrections agents and their families ([Senate Bill 100](#)), and directs federal Covid-19 funding to put more trained police officers on the streets ([Assembly Bill 836](#)), as allowed under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

*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.*