

Sen. Wanggaard: Public safety bills receive funding

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MADISON - On Tuesday, the Joint Committee on Finance authorized funding two public safety programs championed by Senator Van Wanggaard (R-Racine). Two million dollars was released to allow schools to use interactive electronic mapping as part of their school safety plan. Another \$1 million was released to help communities create Community-Oriented Police (COP) Houses.

“As we were unfortunately reminded last week, school safety concerns are constantly evolving,” said Wanggaard. “By using interactive mapping, law enforcement can more quickly organize and coordinate a response to a critical situation. This program puts the latest technology and information into first responders’ hands.”

“Community-Oriented Policing has transformed once crime-ridden neighborhoods in Racine and around the country,” Wanggaard said. “This grant program will help expand COP Houses to challenged areas in the state, improving the quality of life and relationships with police officers in their communities.

Senate Bill 449, which passed the Legislature in October 2021, created a grant program in the Office of School Safety allowing schools to create critical interactive blueprints, or “maps” online, in lieu of physical copies that quickly become outdated. Senate Bill 124 created a grant program for COP Houses and was part of the Public Safety PACT, a package of bills authored by Senators Wanggaard, Taylor and Darling designed to improve policing in Wisconsin. Senate Bill 124 passed the Legislature last summer. Funding for both programs was included in the 2021-23 state budget, but was withheld until today while grant program details were finalized. Both bills passed the Legislature unanimously.

“Public Safety has always been my top priority, and it’s more important now than ever,”
Wanggaard concluded. “I appreciate my colleagues on the Joint Finance Committee approving these programs quickly.”