

U.S. Rep. Pocan: Pocan's 21st Century President Act heads to President's desk

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MADISON, WI - Last night, **U.S. Congressman Mark Pocan's (WI-02)** bill, the **21st Century President Act** (H.R. 3285), passed the United States Senate unanimously by voice vote. Earlier this year, the U.S. House of Representatives also passed it unanimously by voice vote. The bill now heads to President Biden's desk where he is expected to sign it.

Pocan's bill would make commonsense updates to gendered language in the U.S. Code, reflecting the reality that a woman or LGBTQ+ person will someday hold the office of the presidency. Without this change, the law that makes it a crime to threaten to kill, kidnap, or inflict bodily harm upon the President or the President's family would fail to explicitly include a future female president or president with a same-sex spouse.

"Federal law has finally caught up to times, specifically when it comes to who a future president can be," **said Representative Pocan.** "The last presidential election saw six women and one gay man in the Democratic presidential primary, but current federal law would have failed to fully protect them and their spouses if elected. We're closer than we've ever been to electing a woman, or someone with a spouse of the same sex, as president. Today, we've taken one more step toward guaranteed equal protection under the law, and I thank Senator Baldwin for her support in assisting its passage through the Senate."

18 U.S.C. 879 makes it a criminal act to threaten to kill, kidnap, or inflict bodily harm upon the President, a former President, a candidate for President, or a member of their family, while referring to Presidents as men and to their spouses as

wives. The bipartisan 21st Century President Act would replace the terms “wife” and “widow” with “spouse,” and replaces gender-specific pronouns referring to the President and presidential spouses with gender-neutral terms to extend full protection to anyone elected to become the president and first family.

Click [here](#) to read the full text of the legislation.