

Rep. Andraca: Joins AG Kaul to urge Republican leaders to fund Office of School Safety

Posted on Monday, Jun 26, 2023

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Office Established With Bipartisan Support In Response to School Shootings

Madison, Wis. – Representative Deb Andraca, a former elementary school teacher, today joined Attorney General Josh Kaul and national school safety experts in urging Republican leaders to continue funding the Office of School Safety in the Wisconsin state budget. Established with bipartisan support in 2018 with a \$2 million grant from the US Department of Justice, the office has been supported since 2020 with \$1.8 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding which will end in December 2023. The office will not be able to sustain its current operations without fiscal support from the state.

“Legislators in Madison argue about many things, but keeping our kids safe at school should never be up for debate,” said Andraca. “The Office of School Safety has a proven track record, and the services it provides are needed now more than ever. By choosing not to continue its lifesaving work, Wisconsin schools become more vulnerable to violence and school shootings.”

The Office of School Safety provides training that follows national best practices related to crisis prevention and response, free of charge, to any Wisconsin school that requests it. To date \$100 million in grants for safety enhancements, threat assessment training, and mental health training to public, private, charter, and tribal schools throughout Wisconsin.

“Every parent’s worst fear is getting the lockdown alert from their child’s school,” said Andraca. “As a parent who has received this type of call from my own

childrens' school, and as a former teacher who has been in the classroom during these drills, I simply cannot understand the decision not to do everything possible to keep our students safe at school.”

In addition to maintaining critical incident response teams for every region of Wisconsin, the Office of School Safety runs the Speak Up, Speak Out Resource Center, including a 24-hour tipline. Speak Up Speak Out is a comprehensive, one-stop place offering reporting, threat assessment, and critical incident response. More than 1,700 schools and law enforcement agencies in 63 of Wisconsin's 72 counties have received at least one tip. The hotline has received more than 7,000 contacts, half of them in the 2022-2023 school year alone.

According to the DOJ, the two practices proven to prevent school violence are an accessible, effective threat reporting system and training in Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management. The Office of School Safety leads the state in bringing both practices to Wisconsin's K-12 schools.