

Rep. Rettinger: School safety bill passes Assembly

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 15, 2023

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Madison, WI – The full Assembly took up and passed Tuesday a freshman southeast Wisconsin lawmaker’s bill to keep students and staff safe, plus provide more transparency to incidences occurring at schools. The bill reinforces that school resource officers (SRO) need to be part of the solution to the increasing violence in schools, not demonized for political points as seen here in Wisconsin and across the country.

In his maiden speech, State Representative Nik Rettinger (R-Mukwonago) brought up the troubling numbers recently announced by the Badger Institute. According to the article, MPS schools made 778 calls for police service in the fall semester. This a notable increase from the spring 2022 semester and fall 2021 semester. After passage, Rep. Rettinger issued the following statement.

“I am proud to see my bill pass the Assembly today. As officers are called to schools at an alarming rate, it is clear the status quo can’t be continued. I worry that should we stay on our current path more kids, and faculty, will be attacked or subject to other jarring experiences by other students or adults on school grounds. Ensuring students and faculty feel safe in our schools is absolutely essential in fostering an academic environment which allows students to explore and excel in their studies.”

Both Madison and Milwaukee public officials have stated the possibility of returning a police presence to schools in their communities, but no further action has been yet pursued.

“I appreciate that communities that have seen an increase in violence in schools

over the past couple of years recognize that this is a huge concern. While I know it won't solve all our safety and mental health needs, we all want to see the alarming trend of violence since the return of full-time in-person learning reversed and I believe that the SRO program is a proven and common sense approach to protect both students and staff alike.”

In addition to his bill, Representative Rettinger also voted in favor of Assembly Bill 28, Assembly Bill 53, and Assembly Bill 67. These bills now await consideration by the Wisconsin State Senate.