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Rep. Steffen: Legislators seek to ban strip searches in schools

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Madison, WI – Today, legislation that would ban strip searches from occurring in Wisconsin schools was released to members of the Legislature to garner co-sponsorship support. State Representatives David Steffen (R-Howard) and Elijah Behnke (R-Oconto), and State Senator Eric Wimberger (R-Green Bay) worked collectively to introduce the bill, which would effectively prohibit school officials from strip searching students.

This issue received statewide attention when a Suring School District employee allegedly ordered six teenage girls to disrobe down to their underwear in search of a nicotine vape cartridge. According to media reports, neither the girls' parents nor law enforcement were notified of the strip search prior to it occurring, and the girls were required to stand in their underwear in front of the school district employee.

"The allegations surrounding this incident are a clear violation of basic privacy expectations, and the fact that this involves minors is even more concerning," said Rep. Steffen. "We have joined with parents in demanding that these types of strip searches performed by teachers or school staff never happen again in Wisconsin. We are committed to protecting the privacy of our students and this legislation reflects a common-sense change."

"Orders to disrobe on mere suspicion are not even permitted for the worst criminal suspects," said Sen. Wimberger. "It's important that we give students basic dignities, and be the example to instruct them how to respect others when they ultimately leave the school environment."

“This is a common-sense bill that will help protect every student’s dignity while in school,” said Rep. Behnke. “I look forward to getting it passed through the legislature and signed into law.”

This bill is currently circulating for co-sponsorship support, after which it will be referred to a committee for a formal public hearing.

For more information please reach out to the offices listed above.