

Rep. Billings: Statement on four bills receiving public hearings

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Madison – This week, Representative Billings testified before the Assembly Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee and the Assembly Children and Families Committee in support of four bills she introduced as a result of her work on the Protecting Kids Task Force. Representative Billings released the following statement:

“Over the past few months, I have worked to craft meaningful legislation to help protect kids online and provide parents with the information they need to help their children develop healthy online habits. I am glad that four important bills that I introduced received public hearings this week. These bills were inspired by testimony that my fellow members of the Protecting Kids Task Force and I heard from parents, educators, law enforcements, and technology experts about the risks of social media, crimes against children online, and ways we can provide parents with helpful information about responding to rapidly-evolving technology.”

“I authored AB 957 and AB 958 with Rep. Brill to give the Department of Justice four new positions on the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force to combat child exploitation online. Every year, ICAC receives thousands of CyberTips related to child abuse online and sextortion. The number of cases has increased significantly in recent years, and providing them with additional staff will arm the DOJ with the resources they need to take both reactive and proactive measures to combat child predators and conduct preventative outreach to parents and children.”

“AB 967 will provide \$500,000 in funds to parental education programming about social media. The Protecting Kids Task Force heard about the risks to children created by social media and the soaring rates of anxiety, depression, and feelings of lack of belonging that children experience. Parents need help keeping their kids

safe online and this bill will provide them with education and resources to develop healthy habits and avoid the hazards that come with our modern technological environment.”

“I also introduced AB 1000 to change the name of the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB) to the Strengthening Families Board. The Board’s work connects parents with resources related to child development, family welfare, and community support. Unfortunately, families in need of services are sometimes hesitant to engage due to negative reactions to the Board’s name. The Strengthening Families Board will be able to maintain all of the good work of the Board without being hampered by confusion caused by the Board’s current name.”

“I am hopeful that these four bipartisan bills will continue to move through the legislative process quickly. Protecting children should be a priority for all legislators and I will continue to work with my colleagues to support this legislation so it can reach the Governor’s desk soon.”