

Rep. Duchow: Caps session with passage of five bills

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Madison, WI – The Wisconsin State Assembly concluded its legislative session this week, advancing five bills authored by Representative Cindi Duchow (R-Delafield). Senate Bill 16, Senate Bill 264, Senate Bill 431, Assembly Bill 460, and Assembly Bill 1032 were approved by the chamber, with several receiving bipartisan support.

Senate Bill 16 requires the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) to comply with the state's open records and public meetings laws. The legislation was prompted by concerns raised by parents and coaches regarding transparency in key decisions made by the state's premier high school athletic association. SB 16 was concurred in by voice vote during Thursday's floor session.

Senate Bill 431 permits employers to discipline employees, up to and including termination, for pending criminal and non-criminal charges that are substantially related to their job responsibilities. The bill expands an existing exemption under Wisconsin's Fair Employment Act, which previously allowed termination for pending criminal charges substantially related to employment. Proponents say the measure restores balance between workers' rights and employer accountability. SB 431 was concurred in on a party-line vote during Thursday's floor session.

Assembly Bill 460 extends the "once in, always in" school choice provision to include siblings and other dependents. Supporters describe the legislation as a common-sense reform that keeps families together and allows parents to focus on supporting their children's education rather than navigating administrative hurdles. AB 460 passed by voice vote during Thursday's floor session.

Assembly Bill 1032 clarifies that the Natural Resources Board may sell land owned by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) if the property is adjacent to, or

within one mile of, a commercial egg farm, to reduce the risk of avian influenza transmission. Last September, one of the nation's largest egg producers, located in Palmyra, experienced an avian flu outbreak that resulted in the culling of approximately 3 million egg-laying hens. A neighboring property is a recently developed wild bird sanctuary owned by the DNR. AB 1032 authorizes the sale of such properties, allowing conservation efforts to continue under private ownership while mitigating disease transmission risks and maintaining appropriate land stewardship. The bill passed via voice vote during Friday's floor session.

Senate Bill 264, also known as "Gail's Law," was detailed in a previous release.

SB 16, SB 431, and SB 264 now await action by the Governor. AB 460 and AB 1032 have been referred to the State Senate for further consideration.