

Sen. Jacque: Bill to improve government services advances

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MADISON, WI...Legislation to improve the efficiency of government services in Wisconsin authored by Senator André Jacque (New Franken) passed the Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection today and now moves to the full Assembly for a vote.

[Assembly Bill 908](#) is a product of the work performed by the Speaker's Task Force on Government Efficiency and Modernization to enhance the customer experience of Wisconsin residents who work with state agencies. Representative Jim Piwowarczyk (Hubertus) is the lead author in the Assembly.

Under this legislation, the Secretary for the Department of Administration (DOA) is directed to appoint a manager from within the agency to review existing policies, standards and guidelines and to develop improvements. The heads of each individual state agency will designate a lead to coordinate their department's improvement efforts in coordination with the DOA.

"State government agencies will be required to collect and report standardized qualitative and quantitative service delivery metrics, focused on factors such as ease of use, processing times, accessibility, transparency, and overall customer experience," said Jacque. "Data collected will allow the state to identify what is working well and where improvements are needed, ensuring Wisconsin government departments are run more efficiently and are able to make rapid adjustments as needed."

Other bills authored by Sen. Jacque passing out of committee on Tuesday include:

[Cap on UW Tuition and Fee Increases \(Assembly Bill 406\)](#) – After the State

Legislature and Governor Evers enacted a budget which provided the University of Wisconsin with the largest funding increase in twenty years, the Board of Regents still imposed a four percent tuition increase for 2025-26, the third year in a row in which the board raised tuition.

In response, Sen. Jacque and Rep. Dave Murphy (Hortonville) introduced AB 406, which will limit future UW tuition and fee increases to no more than to match the level of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). AB 406 passed the Assembly Committee on Consumer Protection 5-1

“We must set common sense guardrails so that any price increase is reasonable and that the UW System remains a cost-effective option for Wisconsin families,” said Jacque. “A statutory cap on future tuition and fee increases linked to inflation will provide students and families the ability to plan ahead with confidence for college expenses, without continuing to be used to backfill budget decisions that avoid limiting runaway administrative spending.”

[Stillbirth Tax Credit \(Senate Bill 379/Assembly Bill 373\)](#) – Bipartisan legislation introduced with Representative Lindee Brill (Sheboygan Falls) unanimously passed the Joint Committee on Finance, which as amended creates a \$2,000 non-refundable individual income tax credit for parents of stillborn children.

In Wisconsin, over 300 mothers each year endure the trauma of stillbirth. Parents of stillborn children experience many of the same expenses as newborn parents, such as delivery costs. They also have other expenses such as funeral costs, counseling, and lost time at work, while not necessarily having access to the same maternity leave benefits of other mothers.

“Although nothing can compensate for the loss of a child, establishing this tax credit will hopefully alleviate some of the financial burden stillbirth parents face, while giving meaningful, statutory recognition to the loss of their child,” said Jacque.

SB379/AB373 unanimously passed both the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Revenue, and the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means last year. This legislation will now move to the full Assembly and Senate for consideration, and must pass both chambers before moving to the governor’s desk.

[Adoption Process Reform Act \(Senate Bill 79\)](#) – Legislation authored with Rep. Dave Maxey (New Berlin) to make significant reforms to the adoption system in Wisconsin

passed the Senate Committee on Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, Children and Families on a vote of 3-2.

Wisconsin's current adoption system is considered far lengthier and more burdensome than most other states. SB 79 allows for the voluntary termination of parental rights for a child under one year old through a witnessed and notarized affidavit, rather than requiring the parent to appear in court. The bill also allows for payments to licensed out-of-state child placing agencies for adoption related services, expanding the options for families working across state lines while still maintaining appropriate government oversight.

"These changes will create a system that is easier to navigate both for birthparents by removing the fear and uncertainty surrounding mandatory court proceedings, and for the uncertainty experienced by adoptive parents about the permanency of the placement of the child with them," said Jacque.

[Visitation Rights of Nonparents \(Senate Bill 522\)](#) – Under current law, a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) is appointed by the court to represent a child's best interest in family court situations. SB 522 will eliminate confusion in current law by allowing a court to appoint a GAL when a non-parent petitions for visitation rights, such as a stepparent or grandparent, who has maintained a parent-child relationship with a child.

"This bill will provide the courts with important guidance and allow for competing interests to be properly assessed while still serving the best interest of the child and giving them an advocate in family court proceedings," said Jacque.

SB 522 unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, Children and Families. Representative Barb Dittich (Oconomowoc) is the lead author in the Assembly.

[Increased Penalties for Carfentanil Distribution \(Senate Bill 692\)](#) – One of the most dangerous drugs now on the street is carfentanil, a synthetic opioid similar to fentanyl that is supposed to be used exclusively for veterinary purposes as a tranquilizer for large animals such as elephants that is frequently being mixed with other illicit drugs, often without the knowledge of the person ingesting it. Carfentanil is 100 times more potent than fentanyl, and even someone exposed to trace amounts of the substance can experience disastrous health effects.

BB 692, authored in partnership with Rep. Piwowarczyk would increase the penalties for those who traffick carfentanil, with enhancers based on the total weight of any mixture containing the drug. The legislation was requested by prosecutors and narcotics officers, led by Manitowoc County District Attorney Jacalyn LaBre.

“Not only does carfentanil present a significant danger for those who knowingly or unknowingly take the drug, but law enforcement and first responders must also confront serious health risks from even accidental trace exposure,” said Jacque.

SB 692 unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, Children and Families and now moves to the full Senate for consideration.

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin's First Senate District, consisting of Door, Kewaunee and Calumet Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.