

Sen. Jacque: Protecting children using social media focus of Jacque authored bills passing committee

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Legislation product of Speaker's Task Force on Protecting Kids

MADISON, WI...Six bills authored by Senator André Jacque (New Franken) were voted out of committee on Wednesday, including a handful that were the product of the Speaker's Task Force on Protecting Kids aimed at creating safeguards for children using social media and other apps.

The Speaker's Task Force was created last fall to examine how best to work with parents and online platforms to protect kids in the digital age with rapidly changing technology.

"With our children faced with daily exposure to technology and the constant influence of social media, it is imperative that lawmakers remain ahead of technological advances and emerging online threats to the mental health of our kids," said Jacque.

Among Jacque authored bills clearing committee votes on Wednesday include:

[Age Restriction for Apps \(Assembly Bill 962\)](#) - Legislation that requires app store providers to verify the age of users, and to enforce age-based restrictions and safety features to protect kids, passed the Assembly Committee on Children and Families on a vote of 5-4.

"AB 962 requires that digital app stores and developers allow parents to be involved in the online experience of their children," said Jacque. "This is a common-sense policy that will limit the exposure of our kids to age-inappropriate content, while

ensuring meaningful parental involvement.”

Once the age of users has been verified, children will need to get obtain parental consent to download apps or make in-app purchases. Representative Joy Goeben (Hobart) is the lead author of AB 962 in the Assembly.

[Social Media Account for Minors \(Assembly Bill 963\)](#) – Also passing committee is a proposal which places additional safeguards for minors using large social media account, such as Facebook and Tiktok. AB 963 requires social media platforms to use reasonable means to identify the age of users, and if the user is a minor, several safety features must be activated. Among those are that the minor account’s privacy rating be set at the highest level, the platform must refrain from using addictive features, commercial advertising would be prohibited, and the account must be terminated if parental consent is not given.

“We all see that the mental health of our kids is suffering as a result of excessive social media use,” said Jacque. “This legislation gives parents a meaningful role in overseeing the social media habits of their kids, and will limit addictive and harmful features.”

[Requiring Warning Labels for Explicit Content \(Assembly Bill 961\)](#) – Legislation which requires warning labels to be displayed on explicit online content also passed committee on Wednesday. Under the bill, warning labels must appear before content is accessed, must remain visible until acknowledged, and must occupy a substantial portion of the screen, helping prevent inadvertent exposure by minors.

“This bill does not prohibit lawful content, it simply requires that commercial distributors must take responsible, reasonable steps to provide advance warning and protect minors from unintentional exposure to explicit sexual material,” said Jacque.

Rep. Goeben is the lead author in the Assembly along with Sen. Jacque of all three bills. Among other bills authored by Sen. Jacque clearing committee votes on Wednesday include:

[Adoption Education in Schools \(Assembly Bill 918\)](#) – Under current Wisconsin law, if a school district chooses to provide instruction in human growth and development, education on adoption is recommended but not required. AB 918, authored along with Representative Rob Summerfield (Bloomer), would require district teaching

human growth and development to include adoption education. This bill passed the Assembly Committee on Children and Families on a bipartisan 7-2 vote.

“This legislation helps promotes awareness about adoption, and gives students a greater understanding of the full range of supports and options available to both parents and children,” said Jacque.

[Federal STORM Funding \(Assembly Bill 209\)](#) – Bipartisan legislation authored with Representative Shannon Zimmerman (River Falls) to secure hundreds of millions in funding for the Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM) Act, an initiative sponsored by both the Biden and Trump Administrations to establish revolving loan funds and administering a Great Lakes erosion control revolving loan program, passed the Assembly Committee on Environment on a vote of 4-2.

“By tapping into this important federal disaster prevention funding, we can support local projects to mitigate the damage caused by shore erosion and rising water levels, and protect our communities along the Great Lakes shoreline,” said Jacque.

[No Patient Left Alone Act \(Assembly Bill 418\)](#) – Bipartisan legislation authored with Representative Chuck Wichgers (Muskego) to ensure “compassionate care” visits for hospital patients and long term facility residents during a communicable disease outbreak passed the Assembly Committee on Health, Aging and Long Term Care.

“Unfortunately, restricting in person visits during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many unintended health outcomes, such as an increase in loneliness, depression and anxiety,” said Jacque. “This legislation will ensure that vulnerable populations will not have to suffer alone, particularly when faced with end-of-life and other critical decisions.”

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