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SEN. JACQUE'S PUBLIC SAFETY BILLS CLEAR SENATE

Proposals tighten enforcement, ensure criminal justice for cyberstalking, committing battery

MADISON, WI...Local public safety officials will be better able to combat crimes such as cyberstalking, domestic abuse, and gang violence under two bills passed by unanimous voice vote today in the State Senate.

State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), author of the legislation, said he drafted the measures at the request of victims, law enforcement, and prosecutors to give local authorities more options for charging these criminal offenses appropriately and closing ridiculous loopholes.

“Current state law is inconsistent when it comes to charging and prosecuting certain crimes,” Sen. Jacque said. “Whether a stalker or violent domestic abuser can be charged appropriately makes a big difference in whether or not justice will be served.”

The Cyberstalking Protection Act ([Senate Bill 85](#))

Sen. Jacque said that while cyberstalking cases have been properly prosecuted under current law, the need to update Wisconsin's stalking statutes to specifically include text messages, email, web applications and social media has led to criminal defenses that have confused courts and affected sentencing. It is co-sponsored by State Rep. Ron Tusler.

“In certain cases, the defense claimed there was no cyberstalking because the phone never rang, even though harassing text messages were clearly sent repeatedly,” Sen. Jacque said. “This proposal provides stronger protection for victims - and reduces the risk of frivolous defense challenges - by clearly defining specific behaviors as stalking and closing loopholes to ensure protection for victims.”

The People and Property Protection Act ([Protection from Battery and Home Invasion, Senate Bill 53](#))

Sen. Jacque said that under current law, prosecutors can bring more serious charges against a person who breaks into a garage to steal someone's tools or a bicycle than someone who breaks into their home to beat someone up. Sen. Jacque's bill, cosponsored by State Rep. Rachael Cabral-Guevara, allows prosecutors to bring felony charges in these battery cases to make sure the punishment fits the crime.

“Clearly, we need to protect people as well as property,” Sen. Jacque said. “These are common sense legislative revisions that will bring justice to criminals and their victims.”

The bills now head to the State Assembly. An Assembly version of The Cyberstalking Protection Act also cleared committee in that chamber unanimously last week.

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.