



Tony Evers

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 29, 2024

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE:

I am vetoing Senate Bill 836 in its entirety.

This bill would allow a juvenile court to impose restrictions on a juvenile's conduct during the time between a plea hearing and the conclusion of any fact-finding or disposition hearing for youth not being held in custody.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to codifying criminal procedural concepts into the Juvenile Justice Code. The Juvenile Justice Code reflects its origin in the Children's Code and recognizes that children are not adults. Currently, under both the Children's Code and the Juvenile Justice Code, if a youth is in custody and the court finds that they should continue to be in custody, it may place them with a parent or other responsible person and may impose reasonable restrictions on the youth's travel, association with others or places of abode during the period of placement. For pretrial releases under the Criminal Procedure Code, courts may impose conditions reasonably necessary to secure appearance in court, protect members of the community from serious harm or prevent witness intimidation. However, unlike these current predisposition and pretrial situations, the bill would give judges the discretion to impose any reasonable restriction after a plea and through the conclusion of any fact-finding or disposition hearing. I am concerned this bill provides no criteria for a court to consider when imposing restrictions, does not require that the restriction be related to the alleged offense, lacks clarity regarding how any restrictions would be enforced, and is broad and unmoored from any justice or public safety purpose.

Our youth and criminal justice systems must be reformed using data-driven and evidence-based approaches that help keep our communities safe while improving outcomes with better cost efficiency. I share the research-based concerns expressed by the Department of Children and Families that the broad, untargeted court conditions this bill would allow at the predisposition stage may increase involvement in the youth justice system and increase the risk of reoffending.

I continue to welcome meaningful conversations with the Wisconsin State Legislature about reforming our youth and adult justice systems through evidence-based, data-driven solutions that reduce recidivism and improve public safety, bolster our justice system workforce, and ensure our communities have the resources they need to invest in public safety across our state.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Tony Evers'.

Tony Evers
Governor