



CHRIS TAYLOR

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ♦ 76th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Testimony of Rep. Chris Taylor
Assembly Bill 604**

January 25th, 2018

Chairman Spiros & Members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee:

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 604, and for the opportunity to testify. AB 604 simply requires the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) to publish an annual report of incidents of sexual assault and domestic violence that are reported in Wisconsin, including, at a minimum:

- Aggregate demographic information for crime victims
- Aggregate demographic information for offenders
- Aggregate information on the relationships between victims and offenders
- Aggregate information on the types of offenses or charges reported
- The county in which the offenses or charges have been reported

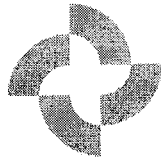
Currently, DOJ is statutorily required to collect statistics on sexual assault and domestic violence. In the past, annual reports were published based on these statistics. The Domestic Violence Incident Report was last published in 2012 by the DOJ and the Sexual Assault in Wisconsin report was last published in 2010 by the Office of Justice Assistance.

Annual reports are a vital way to identify and understand trends, identify opportunities for intervention, and ultimately prevent sexual assault and domestic violence. This bill does not require DOJ to collect any additional data, it simply requires DOJ to analyze and publish the data it already collects on an annual basis to help us make good policy decisions to reduce these incidents. Further, the bill allows DOJ to publish the reports electronically on their website. This acknowledges the fact that DOJ is moving towards publishing data in an interactive format on "dashboards" rather than in a traditional report.

This is a straightforward bill with bipartisan support, and I'm hopeful you will support it.

Sincerely,

Representative Chris Taylor
76th Assembly District



Rape Crisis Center

Testimony of Erin Thornley Parisi
Executive Director, Rape Crisis Center, Inc.
Assembly Bill 604, January 25, 2018

Chairman Spiros and Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee:

Thank you for holding this public hearing on AB 604, and for the opportunity to talk with you today. As the executive director of Dane County's Rape Crisis Center (RCC), I speak in support of this vital initiative.

Among our services, RCC provides 24 hour response to victims of sexual assault through our Helpline, medical advocacy and law enforcement advocacy. We accompany victims to the hospital more than 550 times per year—to some that seems like a lot, but I know that it is a tiny representation of sexual assault victims who actually seek health care and evidence collection. If you want to understand why, I am happy to talk with you about it later.


I have been in this field for the greater part of my adult life, working at the local, state and federal level. I am invested in making sure that victims of sexual assault are provided the services they deserve and I know what it takes to make that happen. I am also keenly aware of the challenges to providing services and reducing these crimes. Public access to data collection that indicates the prevalence of sexual assault should be a minimum requirement.

While human experiences are at the core of this work, data about who is served provides the information we need in order to allocate resources for services and for the cast of professionals it takes to address sexual assault, such as forensic nurses, victim advocates, law enforcement, district attorney staff, and crime lab personnel. In my former role as the executive director of the statewide sexual assault coalition, and in my roles in community based programs, I counted on the information about sexual assaults that was provided by the then-Office of Justice Assistance. I used that information regularly for strategic planning, program development, grant writing, public awareness and budgeting. Access to that information stopped after 2010—and it was hard not to see this as a reflection of how little we value victims of sexual assault.

AB 604 requires the Wisconsin Department of Justice to publish an annual report of incidents of sexual assault reported in Wisconsin, including the basic information outlined in the bill. Sexual assault is the most underreported of all crimes and it is the least we can do to publish a document recording their experiences that helps inform initiatives used to prevent these crimes and serve victims. The information reported is a necessary tool in efforts to eradicate this epidemic. Please support AB 604.

I thank the sponsors of this bill, extend my gratitude to the Chairman and Committee for listening to my testimony and I offer my assistance if you have questions about the bill's relevance to my agency's work.

Sincerely,

Erin M. Thornley Parisi 
Executive Director



Women's Council
· Wisconsin ·

WOMENSCOUNCIL.WI.GOV

Testimony of Christine Lidbury, Wisconsin Women's Council
Assembly Bill 604

January 25th, 2018

Chairman Spiros & Members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 604. I will provide information on how the Wisconsin Women's Council, as the state's commission on the status of women, and some of our community partners serving Wisconsin women and girls, use these data and reports.

Assembly Bill 604 requires the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) to publish annual reports of incidents of sexual assault and domestic violence that are reported in Wisconsin, including minimum reporting requirements. This bill does not create new data collection and reporting, but requires DOJ to analyze and publish the data it already collects on an annual basis, and had previously reported, and allows DOJ to publish the reports electronically on their website.

About the Wisconsin Women's Council

The Wisconsin Women's Council is a state agency with a 15-Member bi-partisan Council, including sitting legislators, appointed by the Governor and Legislative leaders. Among the Council's statutory responsibilities is the directive to research and report on the status of women in Wisconsin. In carrying out this work, the Council has relied upon DOJ's reports on the incidents of sexual assault and domestic violence reported to law enforcement.

Research and Reporting on the Status of Women in Wisconsin

The Women's Council regularly creates county-level reports on the status of women using, where possible, publicly available, official government data. In reporting on domestic violence and sexual assault in Wisconsin, over past two decades, DOJ's Domestic Violence Incidence Report (last published in 2012) and Sexual Assault in Wisconsin report (last published in 2010) have been *the* sources – indeed the only sources – for such data in Wisconsin. To my knowledge, these two reports remain the only sources of official, statewide and county-level, reliable, consistent data, comparable from year-to-year, and including expert analyses, of reported incidents of sexual assault and domestic violence in Wisconsin.

continued

These reports are critical to Women's Council, and other community partners', work to:

- identify, track and understand trends;
- include *violence against women* in assessing the status of women;
- establish and evaluate programs and interventions; and
- inform funding, including private grantmaking.

Timely, reliable data are a key element of effective program and policy analyses.

These DOJ reports have a wide reach and ongoing usefulness in government and community organizations across the state. I will close with statements offered by three of my colleagues - directors of community Women's Funds on the need and uses for reliable local data on domestic violence and sexual assault for their work to support women and girls.

The Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region uses data to inform our programming and grantmaking decisions. Access to reliable data about domestic violence and sexual assault is important to our efforts to make sure all women and girls live in safety. We periodically share data with our donors and community stakeholders to increase awareness of the many important issues facing females of all ages in our community.

As an organization that champions empowerment of women, this data is critical to our work and helps us educate our communities and focus our fundraising and grantmaking in Dane County. – A Fund for Women (Madison)

The Women's Fund of Greater Green Bay periodically gathers data, including data about violence against women, to share with the community and potential donors the issues women face and to factor into future planning for how the fund can support local women and girls.

Sincerely,



Christine Lidbury
Executive Director

testimony



To: Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and
Public Safety
Date: January 25, 2018
From: Chase Tarrier, Public Policy Coordinator
Re: Support of AB 604

End Domestic Abuse WI
1245 E Washington Ave, Suite 150
Madison, Wisconsin 53704
Phone: (608) 237 3985 Fax: (608) 255-3560
chaset@endabusewi.org

Dear Chairman Spiros and members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Assembly Bill 604 (AB 604), which requires that the Department of Justice publish an annual report on sexual assault offenses and domestic abuse cases reported in the state of Wisconsin. End Domestic Abuse WI (End Abuse) is the statewide voice for survivors of domestic violence and the membership organization representing local domestic violence victim service providers throughout the state. We are supportive of AB 604 and respectfully urge the Committee members to approve its passage.

Under current law, DOJ collects data on domestic abuse and sexual assault crimes, but has not published a report on this data for several years. AB 604 would change current law to require that DOJ analyze and publish the data that is currently being collected each year.

At End Abuse, we rely on evidence based strategies to inform our work and ensure that our response to domestic violence is grounded in the realities faced by domestic violence victims. The changes outlined in AB 604, by requiring DOJ to analyze and publish data related to domestic violence crimes, will make available to the public invaluable information that advocates, homicide prevention specialists and coordinated community response teams can use to prevent domestic abuse in the future.

We applaud the work of the bi-partisan group of legislators who introduced this legislation, and hope it will be recognized as an important step towards increasing public awareness of domestic abuse (a form of violence experienced by 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men), as well as a valuable tool for future prevention work around the state. By shining a light on the experience of survivors in the criminal justice system, we can more effectively support victims and their children while holding offenders accountable.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony today. We appreciate the Committee's thoughtful consideration of our concerns, and respectfully urge you to support this proposal.

Feel free to contact me at chaset@endabusewi.org or 608.237.3985 with any further questions or concerns.

January 25th, 2018

Testimony in Support of AB 604

Shannon Barry
Executive Director, Domestic Abuse Intervention Services

Chairman Spiros & Members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee:

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 604, and for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Since 1977, DAIS has worked passionately and effectively to ensure the safety and well-being of domestic violence survivors and their families, and to change societal attitudes that perpetuate violence and the abuse of power. We offer a wide array of crisis intervention and community education/prevention programs, including a 24-hour Help Line, programming for children from violent homes, legal advocacy, support groups, emergency safety planning, and the only domestic violence shelter for all of Dane County.

We wholeheartedly support Assembly Bill 604. Annual reports by the Department of Justice on domestic violence data can better help us evaluate the services and programming we provide, including those I've listed above. Requiring these annual reports will provide us the opportunity to identify intervention points, and ultimately move towards preventing domestic violence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon Barry". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Shannon Barry
Executive Director, DAIS