



Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

Testimony on Senate Bill 442

Thank you Committee Members for the hearing today on Senate Bill 442.

I introduced this bill, along with Senator Taylor, and Representative Jacque. It is similar to current law in the state of Florida to combat the outbreak of human trafficking in the state by implementing a mandatory \$5000 surcharge on individuals convicted of soliciting or patronizing prostitutes, or keeping a place of prostitution. Under this bill the surcharge amounts collected are used for treatment and services for sex-trafficking victims and for criminal investigative operations and law enforcement relating to Internet crimes against children.

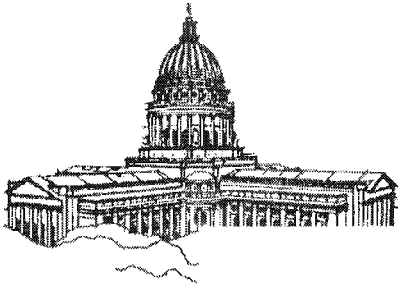
Investigators, prosecutors and victims' support and advocacy groups have supported this suggested change as a means to address present penalties for soliciting prostitution which provide an insufficient deterrent, pointing to a high incidence of repeat solicitation offenses by many individuals with enough disposable income to quietly pay fines currently in place.

The federal government has acknowledged the link between prostitution and trafficking in women and children as a form of modern day slavery. Regrettably, Milwaukee has become known as a hub for human trafficking in the Midwest, causing the problem to spread throughout the state, predominantly in the Fox Valley and the Green Bay area.

Prostitution demand is a factor for human trafficking and a number of costs and detrimental consequences for society. Increasing the penalty will increase the funding tools available for victim services and enforcement initiatives, as well as provide a financial deterrent to those who may break the law.

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State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882 • (608) 266-1832 • Toll-free (866) 615-7510
Sen.Wanggaard@legis.wi.gov • SenatorWanggaard.com



LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
Public Hearing on SB 442 – Prostitution Crime Surcharge and Making Appropriations
January 4, 2018

Good morning fellow committee Members. I want to thank the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety for the work done on Assembly Bill 435 and thank the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety for today's public hearing on SB 442.

Brad Myles, CEO of Polaris, a global anti-trafficking advocacy group was quoted as saying "If we're serious about ending sex trafficking, it's very clear that something needs to be done about the buyers."

I couldn't agree more. We need to do everything we can to reduce the demand for prostitution and this bill creates another disincentive in the effort to curb prostitution and eradicate human trafficking. Today, we seek to join a national push that addresses the disparity in a Department of Justice report that indicated some 43,000 women, nationally, were arrested for prostitution-related offenses in 2010, compared to just 19,000 men (which included buyers of sex, traffickers, and male sex workers).

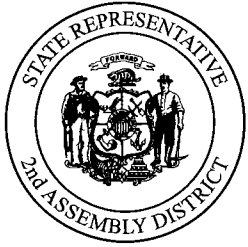
Today, law enforcement and legislative bodies have come to better understand the contributing factors and underlying causes that permeate the sex trade industry. Thanks to local and statewide groups like the Human Trafficking Task Force of Greater Milwaukee, there heightened education and awareness. This has led to a need to rethink policing, charging, and punishments connected to these crimes.

As a state, we have some of the toughest laws in the country to deal with the sex trades. But truth be told, more arrests continue to be for prostitution than solicitation. Even when fines have been levied at the buyers, the penalties were clearly not stiff enough to get the attention. I think we will get their attention now. Data provided by Polaris showed a 17 percent increase in the number of human trafficking cases handled in Wisconsin in 2015 and an increase of 24 percent nationwide. I think we will send a definitive message that Wisconsin is not open for this kind of business.

I have had the opportunity to work with local activists and organizations in Milwaukee, taken food and resources to help Wisconsin residents caught up in this nightmare of sex-trafficking and am hopeful that we can eradicate this industry.

AB 435 is a strong deterrent and through the \$5,000 surcharge created by this bill, we will better be able to support critically needed supportive treatment and services for Wisconsin sex-trafficking victims. We will help to generate funds to support the tough work of law enforcement in protecting our children targeted by Internet crimes. Therefore, I hope you will join us in supporting AB 435. Thank you for your time.

Senator Lena C. Taylor
4th Senate District



ANDRÉ JACQUE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-9870
Fax: (608) 282-3602
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0002
Rep.Jacque@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708-8952

January 4, 2018

Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 442, bi-partisan legislation modeled after current Florida law, which I have brought forward with Chairman Wanggaard and Senator Taylor to attack the growing scourge of human trafficking in Wisconsin by imposing a mandatory \$5,000 surcharge on individuals convicted of patronizing/soliciting prostitutes or keeping a place of prostitution. This change has been suggested by investigators, prosecutors and victims' support and advocacy groups as a means to address present penalties for soliciting prostitution which provide an insufficient deterrent, citing a high incidence of repeat solicitation offenses by many individuals with enough disposable income to quietly pay existing fines.

The federal government acknowledges the link between prostitution and trafficking in women and children as a form of modern day slavery. Unfortunately, Milwaukee has become known as the human trafficking capital of the Midwest and the problem has been rapidly spreading across Wisconsin, particularly to the Fox Valley and the Green Bay area.

Under Florida state law, there is a \$5,000 surcharge (increased from \$500 beginning in January 2013) that was created for solicitation of a prostitute in addition to the other penalties assessed. SB 442 would similarly create in Wisconsin an additional \$5,000 surcharge for violations of patronizing prostitutes, soliciting prostitutes, pandering, and keeping a place of prostitution, and equally split the proceeds of the surcharge to increase the appropriations for Internet Crimes Against Children task forces and services for Sex Trafficking Victims under Wis. Stats. 20.437 (1) (e). Demand for prostitution drives human trafficking and a wide variety of societal costs, and appropriately increasing the civil penalty will significantly enhance deterrence and weaken demand while funding important victim services and enforcement efforts.

The Assembly companion to this legislation, AB 435, has already passed the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety by a unanimous 9-0 vote, and is supported by the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association and numerous law enforcement agencies, Attorney General Brad Schimel and the Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation, Eye Heart World, the East Central Synod of Wisconsin Women of the ELCA, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Damascus Road, Fierce Freedom, the City of Milwaukee and UMOS.

Thank you for your consideration in hearing and advancing this very important legislation.