



STATE SENATOR

Eric Wimberger

DISTRICT 30

**State Senator Eric Wimberger
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
Re: Robbery of a financial institution and providing a penalty
January 3rd, 2023**

Thank you Senator Wanggaard and committee members for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 485, which fixes an oversight in state statute that fails to protect Wisconsin's financial institutions, and could lead to potentially lethal consequences.

During an incident early last year, a bank robbery suspect entered into a bank and presented to a teller a handwritten note demanding money, but not threatening any violence. Following current training policies, the teller did not resist and handed over the money to the suspect. While the suspect was caught and arrested, the case was later dismissed because state statute requires the use of force or threat of imminent force to be used for a crime to be considered robbery.

Senate Bill 485 amends state statute to include creating circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to believe the use of force was imminent. Bank tellers confronted with someone demanding money are doing their best to keep customers and fellow staff safe in what could easily escalate into a dangerous situation. This legislation aims to encourage banks and their employees to take every demand for money seriously, even if there is not a direct threat.

This commonsense fix holds criminals accountable and keeps employees and customers safe. Thank you again for holding this hearing and I hope you'll join us in support of Senate Bill 485.

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RON TUSLER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 3rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 485
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
1/3/2024

Chair Wanggaard and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 485, relating to the robbery of a financial institution, and providing a penalty. Under the current law, the definition and penalization of robbery are contingent on the explicit threat of imminent force. However, this narrowly defined criterion does not encompass all the manipulative and threatening scenarios that bank employees and customers face. The absence of an explicit threat does not mean the absence of fear, the perception of danger, or an implied threat.

Senate Bill 485 proposes a vital change- considering circumstances that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the use of force is imminent as an act of robbery. This modification is not merely a change in wording; it's a stride toward justice and deterrence. It acknowledges the psychological trauma and fear instilled in victims, even when physical force isn't explicitly threatened. By broadening the scope of what constitutes robbery, we can better protect our citizens and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

Moreover, this bill will act as a deterrent to those contemplating such crimes. Knowing that the law recognizes the implicit threats and psychological manipulation will discourage criminals from exploiting the loopholes in the current system.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to consider the broader implications of Senate Bill 485. It's not just about redefining a term; it's about extending protection to every citizen and employee who walks into a financial institution, ensuring their safety and security. Your support for this bill will signify a commitment to the well-being of our citizens and the integrity of our financial institutions.

Thank you for your consideration.