



ALEX A. DALLMAN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 39TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in Favor of Assembly Bill 259

Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

June 3, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Spiros and committee members for allowing me to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 259, which will ensure campground owners can remove guests from their property who do not have consent to be there. I also want to thank Senator Jacque for his leadership on this bill.

Under current law, campground owners have a difficult time removing individuals from their campground premises that do not have permission to be there. These individuals are sometimes referred to as "squatters." State statutes are unclear whether landlord-tenant laws apply to campgrounds, and therefore law enforcement officers are unable to remove these individuals from the premises because they currently treat campgrounds as a dwelling place.

This is a growing concern across Wisconsin. Campgrounds are a place for individuals to contract with a campground owner to stay there for a certain amount of time, not without permission. AB 259 makes it clear in statutes that landlord-tenant laws under Chapter 704, Wis. Stats., do not apply to an occupant, guest, or guests of an occupant or guest of a campground. This bill also provides that a campground owner or operator notify the individual who does not have consent to remain or enter the premises to leave. This allows for due diligence from campground owners.

The amendment to this bill removes the requirement that law enforcement arrest individuals, but directs law enforcement to assist a campground owner or operator with removing the individual who does not have consent to be on the premises. This clarifies in statute that law enforcement can, and should, help remove individuals from campgrounds that refuse to leave.

Campgrounds should be a place where people can spend time with family and friends for a contractually agreed to time, not create a permanent residence without consent. AB 259 clarifies state statutes and allows campground owners and operators to remove unwelcome guests.

Thank you again, for the opportunity to testify before this committee today and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



Testimony before the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Senator André Jacque

Assembly Bill 259

June 3, 2025

Chairman Spiros and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today with Rep. Dallman as the authors of Assembly Bill 259, which clarifies that campground guests in Wisconsin are not tenants, and are therefore not subject to the state landlord tenant laws.

For years, Wisconsin campground owners have sought legal clarification that campgrounds are not residences and may remove guests without going through the civil law eviction process, and that law enforcement shall assist them, if requested by the campground owner.

One business even had two employee-guests at the campground who were terminated but refused to leave. Local law enforcement would not intervene, incorrectly believing that the former employees were tenants, despite language in the camping agreement clearly stating that guests are not tenants. Similar issues have occurred with individuals sexually harassing or attempting to provoke fights with guests, squatters, and sex offenders.

Calling law enforcement to a campground, and the attention that follows, is not something management wants to be forced to do. However, sometimes guests at public accommodations need to be removed from the premises. When guests will not leave, proprietors need to be able to call upon law enforcement to assist. Campground guests, like tavern and motel guests, are subject to removal by the police, despite some mistaken interpretations by local law enforcement that campground guests are tenants and must be evicted.

But campgrounds do not provide residences to their guests; they allow people to stay temporarily on the campground's premises. The limited scope of campgrounds' licensure does not allow campgrounds to convey a tenancy to a guest.

Campground agreements also explicitly state that the guests are not granted a lease, a periodic tenancy nor tenancy at will. As is the case with hotel guests, when campers cause a breach of the peace by refusing to leave, it is not a civil matter and requires law enforcement intervention.

We will be introducing an amendment in response to suggestions from the Senate hearing to address guest removal using the existing trespass law, Wis. Stats. sec. 943.13 so that arrests are not mandated. We, and campground owners, are comfortable that this approach will make it quite clear that guests who will not leave a campground are subject to the current trespass process and forfeiture penalties- needing law enforcement involvement with some guest removals that does not have to mean arrests.

Assembly Bill 259 makes it clear that unwelcome campground guests who refuse to leave are not subject to landlord-tenant laws. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation, and I would be happy to answer any questions.