



RON TUSLER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 3rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 298
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety
June 3, 2025

Chairman Spiros and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important public safety proposal, Assembly Bill 298.

This legislation builds on the success of 2021 Act 109, which provided critical incident mapping for every K-12 school in Wisconsin. That initiative passed unanimously, and for good reason. It equipped our first responders with essential tools to protect students and staff during emergencies, and those tools have already proven invaluable during recent crises in communities like Mount Horeb and Madison. Since the passage of Act 109, about 1,900 of the over 2,000 K-12 schools have been mapped in Wisconsin.

This bill takes the next logical step by expanding that same life-saving technology to Wisconsin's technical college campuses. These institutions serve tens of thousands of students, staff, and faculty across the state, it only makes sense that we expand this successful program to our Tech Colleges.

Just like Act 109, this proposal requires a joint application from local law enforcement and the technical college president. That partnership fosters real-time collaboration, which ensures that the people responsible for public safety are communicating before a crisis ever begins.

The benefits of critical incident mapping are clear:

- Faster and more informed responses from first responders
- Greater situational awareness during chaotic emergencies
- Improved coordination among multiple agencies
- Better proactive training and preparedness
- Integration with data systems, including real-time blue force tracking to avoid friendly fire

According to the Critical Response Group, two additional lives are lost per minute during an active shooter when law enforcement cannot locate the shooter immediately. Every second matters during an emergency, and with this mapping technology, we give law enforcement and emergency personnel the ability to act with speed, precision, and confidence.

Thank you for hearing Assembly Bill 298, I am happy to take any questions you may have.



June 3rd, 2025

Representative Spiros, Chair

Members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Testimony on 2025 Assembly Bill 298

Relating to: grants for technical colleges to provide mapping data to law enforcement.

Thank you, Chairman Spiros, and other members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. The critical incident mapping grant program would assist tech colleges and law enforcement during high pressure incidents. This grant would provide all involved first responders and tech colleges a vital tool to quickly coordinate an emergency response on our campuses during situations such as an active shooter or a natural disaster.

The Legislature passed 2021 WI Act 109, which created a grant program for K-12 schools to get digital blueprints of their buildings, which are more easily accessible during emergencies than standard paper versions. These maps provide a clear and accurate layout of the buildings that can be updated in real time to assist with better coordination between first responders. The want of this resource was in high demand, and the original amount allocated to the grant program was not enough. DOJ transferred more money into the program to help cover the rest of the applicants. 347 school districts got awarded the grant money.

This legislation allows tech colleges the opportunity to apply for these grants through the Office of School Safety. The local education authority and local law enforcement would need to submit a joint application, ensuring communication and cooperation between these entities. Critical incident mapping of buildings and facilities provides many benefits before and during an emergency, including enhanced and improved situational awareness for first responders, quicker response times, improved coordination among first responders, and improved proactive preparedness and training

Communication and cooperation are key, especially when it comes to keeping our students, educators, and first responders safe. It is our responsibility to act in the best interest of all Wisconsinites. This bill would benefit communities statewide and help improve our public safety infrastructure. Thank you all again for your time and consideration, and I will be happy to answer any questions you have.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jesse James'.

Senator Jesse James

23rd Senate District

Sen.James@legis.wisconsin.gov



June 3, 2025

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

From: Joe Hanson, Vice President of Sales, Critical Response Group

Re: Grants for Technical Colleges to Provide Mapping Data to Law Enforcement.

Chairman Spiros and members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, thank you for your willingness to hold a hearing on Assembly Bill 298. Relating to grants for technical colleges to support the development and sharing of mapping data used by law enforcement agencies. Chairman Spiros, I would also like to thank you, as well as committee members Novak and Jacobson, for your support of Assembly Bill 298. In addition, I'd like to thank Representative Tusler and Senator James for authoring this legislation.

This proposal builds on the successful efforts of executing critical incident mapping of all K-12 schools in Wisconsin (2021 Act 109), **which passed the Legislature with unanimous support.** Since Act 109, over 2,000 schools have been mapped as part of the grant. Additionally, I'm proud to report that 16 other states have followed Wisconsin's lead since and passed similar grant programs, leading to over 25,000 schools, colleges, universities, and other piece of critical infrastructure being mapped nationwide.

The success of this effort is rooted in strong partnerships with law enforcement. When law enforcement and education leaders work together, we are better equipped to protect our schools, our students, and our communities. Like the grant program for K-12 schools, this program requires a joint application from the local education authority, in this case, the Technical College

President, and local law enforcement. This ensures collaboration between these entities, enhancing their safety and security.

Critical incident mapping of buildings and facilities provides many benefits before and during an emergency. These include:

- Enhanced and improved situational awareness for first responders
- Quicker response times
- Improved coordination among first responders
- Improved proactive preparedness and training
- Added value to broader data systems

In closing, I strongly support Assembly Bill 298. Having worked closely with both school leaders and law enforcement to implement these tools in hundreds of schools across Wisconsin and beyond, I've seen firsthand their effectiveness and the safety they bring. This legislation will extend that same level of protection to our technical colleges.

Thank you again for your consideration. I respectfully urge your support of Assembly Bill 298.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



June 3, 2025

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

From: Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association

Re: Support Assembly Bill 298 – Grants for Technical Colleges to Provide Mapping Data to Law Enforcement

Chairman Spiros and committee members, thank you for your willingness to hold a hearing on this legislation. We would also like to thank Representative Tusler and Senator James for authoring Assembly Bill 298.

The Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association represents hundreds of law enforcement leaders from around the state. We support and advocate for policies that improve public safety as well as the safety of first responders.

One policy we supported is the mapping of all Wisconsin K-12 schools. Critical Incident Maps reduce first responder response time. This is why we also support making this tool available to Wisconsin's technical colleges.

When first responders have accurate information shared by all responders, responses can be expedited, which saves lives. When seconds are critical, a surgical response saves time and lives.

When arriving at any stressful or urgent incident, having a better understanding of the building's layout, entrances, and exits is crucial. With critical incident mapping, our response is enhanced when all responders operate off the same map of a potentially unknown location.

Similar to the grant program for K-12 schools, this program requires a joint application from the local technical college and local law enforcement. This ensures collaboration between us and improves our relationship in general, and more specifically, improves our response to any emergencies on their campus.

On behalf of the WCPA's membership, I respectfully request your support of Assembly Bill 298.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have.