



ANDRÉ JACQUE

STATE SENATOR • 1ST SENATE DISTRICT

Phone: (608) 266-3512

Fax: (608) 282-3541

Sen.Jacque@legis.wi.gov

State Capitol • P.O. Box 7882

Madison, WI 53707-7882

Testimony before the Assembly Committee on Judiciary

Senator André Jacque

Assembly Bill 86

March 4, 2025

Chairman Tusler and Committee Members:

Thank you for holding this public hearing on Assembly Bill 86, which would impose the penalty of life imprisonment for the devastating crime of child trafficking when three or more children have been sold into this brutal form of modern slavery. This bill also ensures that those convicted of trafficking children will **not** be eligible for release to extended supervision.

Child trafficking is a horrific crime that steals the innocence and future of our most vulnerable — our children. It is a crime that destroys lives, leaving long-lasting scars on its victims, often for the rest of their lives. In Wisconsin and across the nation, child trafficking is a hidden epidemic, and the problem continues to grow. Sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of minors are among the worst forms of child abuse, and according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one in 10 youth will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. Other studies show that over 70 percent of sex trafficking begins while the victim is a minor, and as several Internet Crimes Against Children investigators have relayed to me, pimps seek out victims to exploit when they are most vulnerable. These children are often manipulated, threatened, or coerced into situations beyond their control. Many of these victims are never rescued or are left to endure unimaginable suffering for far too long.

The trafficking of children is a devastating violation of human dignity, and the victims of trafficking deserve justice. They deserve to know that the individuals who harmed them will not be allowed to return to society, potentially to harm others.

I urge you all to support this bill, to stand with the children who have no voice in this fight, and to ensure that those who engage in the trafficking of children will face justice in the most powerful way possible. Let's send a message to these creeps: If you come to Wisconsin to victimize our children, you will spend the rest of your life in prison. This bill is an important part of a comprehensive strategy to deter child sex trafficking in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration of Assembly Bill 86. I'm happy to answer any questions.



SHAE SORTWELL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Hearing Testimony
Assembly Committee on Judiciary
March 4, 2025
Assembly Bills 86 and 87

Chairman Tusler and members of the Assembly Committee on Judiciary – Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on ABs 86 and 87, two bills that seek justice for human trafficking victims.

Human trafficking is one of the world's greatest atrocities, with lifetime repercussions to victims and ripple effects upon societies. In this modern slavery, victims are forced into various forms of exploitation, including labor, criminal activity, and sexual favors.

Wisconsin law should reflect the justice these victims deserve. Our law has not gone far enough to lock up the monsters that harm trafficked children. Assembly Bill 86 increases the penalty for child traffickers, where three or more children are victimized, from a Class C felony to a Class A, which carries a penalty of life imprisonment.

Under Assembly Bill 87, restitution is required to be paid immediately by the trafficker to their victims in Wisconsin upon their conviction. Currently, 27 states provide restitution for trafficked survivors, including Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, and Michigan. This restitution can help contribute to payments for medical and psychological services, housing, child care, property, or any costs of labor provided.

Furthermore, this legislation also requires all financial obligations imposed as part of a criminal sentence to be paid before a felon's right to vote is fully restored. This will ensure justice is entirely served and full accountability is given to those that still owe a debt to their victims, especially to those that are trafficked.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this legislation and would gladly answer any questions the committee may have.

**NINETY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Cincinnati, Ohio
August 30, 31, September 1, 2016**

Resolution No. 281: Prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation

Origin: Convention Committee on Americanism

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The sexual victimization of children is overwhelming in magnitude, yet largely unrecognized and underreported; and

WHEREAS, Statistics show that one in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before they reach the age of 18; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 70 percent of all reported sexual assaults occur to children ages 17 and under and it is believed that as many as 73 percent of children do not report the abuse for a least one year and 45 percent do not report their abuse for 5 years or more; and

WHEREAS, The widespread use of the Internet to sexually victimize children presents an even broader threat to the safety of children; and

WHEREAS, According to *Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later* conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, one in seven children receive unwanted sexual solicitations online and one in three children are exposed to unwanted sexually explicit material; and

WHEREAS, By far the most prevalent exploitive act reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children is the production and distribution of pornographic images of children; and

WHEREAS, The lives of the children featured in these illegal images are forever altered, not only by the exploitation itself, but by the permanent record of it; and

WHEREAS, The impact of these terrible acts can devastate families and put children at risk of depression, disassociation, and post-traumatic stress – symptoms that can last well into adulthood; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That The American Legion support appropriate legislation aimed at the prevention, investigation and prosecution of child sexual exploitation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion be authorized to collaborate with national and state agencies and organizations involved in the prevention of child sexual exploitation as determined by the Americanism Commission to the end that The American Legion can maintain an effective role in preventing child sexual exploitation; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That departments and posts are encouraged to actively raise community awareness about the prevalence of sexual exploitation of children and are encouraged to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, government entities and public/private organizations that seek to empower the public to take immediate and direct action to enforce a zero tolerance policy regarding child sexual exploitation.