



# Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

## Testimony on Senate Bill 121

Thank you, committee members, for taking the time today to hear Senate Bill 121, which would reorganize Wisconsin's battery statutes.

Last year, I chaired the Study Committee on Recodification of Battery Statutes. The Committee's goal was to reorganize, consolidate, modernize, and resolve any conflicts or ambiguities in the existing laws.

It was a slightly unique study committee because our work didn't depend on public testimony. Rather, our committee was composed of members from organizations that have experience working with these laws and will be affected by a change to them. That included fellow Senator, Senator Roys, a member from the state public defender, a circuit court judge, a district attorney, and a county sheriff.

Members came from each corner of the judicial process, and the fact that we were able to unanimously agree on the final draft is a testament to the constructive discussions the committee was able to have.

Because it is a highly technical bill, I won't go into great detail, however, I do want to highlight a few changes this bill makes and doesn't make.

This proposal would condense the current 10 battery statutes to just 5: general battery, battery by certain people, battery to certain people, battery to an unborn child, and battery to an elder person. Battery to an unborn child and elder person were kept separated out due to the unique elements of those crimes. It's important to note that there are no substantive changes to any elements of any crime that is included in this recodification.

I believe this bill will help clarify the battery statutes to make them easier for everyone involved in the justice system, from the police on the street, to the prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges in the courtroom.

Thank you for considering the committee's recommendations and Senate Bill 121. My Legislative Council attorney and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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To: Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety  
From: Badger State Sheriffs' Association  
Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association  
Date: April 1, 2025  
**RE: Support for Senate Bill 121 – Recodification of Battery Statutes**

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Chairman Wanggaard, Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on SB 121. I am Dodge County Sheriff Dale Schmidt. I am also the Past President for BSSA and a member of the joint BSSA and WS&DSA legislative committee.

I had the privilege of serving on the Study Committee on the Criminal Code and want to recognize the diligent work of the committee members, particularly Senator Wanggaard, for his leadership in advancing this legislation.

Battery offenses remain among the most frequently charged crimes in Wisconsin. However, the statutes governing these offenses have become increasingly complex and disjointed, spread across multiple sections of the criminal code. SB 121 addresses this by consolidating and clarifying the battery statutes into a more logical, cohesive structure.

Importantly, this bill does **not** change the underlying elements or penalties of battery-related crimes. Instead, it improves the usability and accessibility of the law for those who apply it daily—law enforcement, prosecutors, defense counsel, judges, and the public. SB 121 fosters consistency in interpretation and application by aligning terminology and organizing related provisions together.

While this kind of statutory clean-up may not draw headlines, it plays a critical role in the fair and efficient administration of justice. A more streamlined and organized code reduces confusion, minimizes charging errors, and makes it easier to train officers and legal practitioners. We appreciate the thoughtful and collaborative effort behind this legislation and urge the committee to support SB 121.

Thank you for your time and consideration.