



SB 15 Testimony before the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

Senator André Jacque

February 18, 2025

Chairman Wanggaard and Colleagues,

Thank you for holding this hearing and the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 15, protecting adults at risk.

It is critical that we protect the most vulnerable in our society, recognizing that vulnerability can often be present irrespective of youthfulness or advanced age.

Wisconsin has a longstanding definition of "adult at risk", which refers to any adult who has a physical or mental condition that substantially impairs his or her ability to care for his or her needs and who has experienced, is currently experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation.

Senate Bill 15 will institute a number of protections for adults at risk which already apply under Wisconsin statute when a crime victim is age 60 and above:

- Allowing prosecutors to request that a court freeze or seize assets from a defendant who has been charged with a financial exploitation crime when the victim is an adult at risk in order to preserve them for restitution.
- Allowing an adult at risk who is seeking a domestic violence, individual-at-risk, or harassment restraining order to appear in a court hearing by telephone or live audiovisual means.
- Increasing the penalty for forcible sexual misconduct that is currently a second degree sexual assault to a first degree sexual assault (going from a Class C to a Class B Felony) if the victim is an adult at risk.
- Allowing a term of imprisonment that is imposed for a criminal conviction to be increased in length if the crime victim was an adult at risk.

Senate Bill 15/Assembly Bill 19 has broad bi-partisan support and is formally backed by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities. Last session this legislation was introduced as 2023 SB 72/AB 78, passing the Senate for the second consecutive session, and was additionally supported by the Alzheimer's Association and the Wisconsin Chapter of A-TEAM, a grassroots network of families who work legislatively to advance the cause of people with disabilities in the workplace, society, and home.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 15.