



June 10th, 2025

Senator Jagler, Chair

Senator Quinn, Vice-Chair

Members of the Senate Committee on Education

Testimony on 2025 Senate Bill 41

Thank you, Chairman Jagler, and other members of the committee for listening to my testimony today. It is all too often that we turn on the news and see the headline of another school shooting. These tragedies break our hearts and crush our communities. In recent months, we've seen all too clearly that this can even happen here in Wisconsin. Thankfully, there are proven ways to help our kids – investing in physical infrastructure; things like reinforced doors, shatter-resistant glass, cameras and providing security training to staff.

In 2017, the Governor signed Act 143 into law, having passed the Legislature with strong bi-partisan support. This legislation created the Office of School Safety and appropriating \$100 million in grants to protect our schools. Senate Bill 41 would continue to build off the success of Act 143 by creating a one-time grant program to assist even more Wisconsin schools in improving the safety of their buildings and providing security training. The original \$100 million was eagerly used up by schools, and I expect this new program will cover all the schools who didn't get funding in the first round.

This legislation before you creates the new program, specifies that schools who did not receive the grants for infrastructure last time should be prioritized, and caps the amount each school can get at \$20,000. As was the case on the original grant, the Office of School Safety will report back annually to JFC.

SB 41 guarantees that every school in Wisconsin has the opportunity to apply and access this funding for them to make critical infrastructure and staff training updates. The funding in this bill will also help fill in some of the security gaps that our schools are currently facing.

We need to ensure that our Wisconsin schools have the necessary tools and resources needed to create and maintain a safe learning environment for all students. Just like the funding from Act 143, I am confident that this program will achieve this goal of giving more Wisconsin schools the chance to further enhance and update their safety measures. This is an essential investment in the health and safety of our kiddos. Thank you all again for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse James".

Senator Jesse James

23rd Senate District

Sen.James@legis.wisconsin.gov



Joy GOEBEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 5th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Senate Committee on Education

Senate Bill 41

Representative Joy Goeben

June 10, 2025

Good Morning Chairman Jagler, Vice Chair Quinn, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 41. I would like to thank Senator James for sharing this legislation idea with me as well as all his work on this bill.

Senate Bill 41 (SB 41) builds off the success of Act 143 by creating a one-time grant program to assist even more Wisconsin schools in improving the safety of their buildings and providing security training for school personnel. As amended, this legislation would open up a new round of grants to all public, private, and tribal schools in Wisconsin, with priority given to those schools that may have used previous rounds of awarded grant funding on mapping their campuses. By providing a visual overview of the campus, digital maps help first responders understand the situation and make informed decisions during emergencies. Using previous rounds of grant funding, these schools still took up critical school safety measures. This bill was written to ensure they would not be cut from further consideration to continue to improve infrastructure.

As a state, we need to ensure that our Wisconsin schools have the necessary tools and resources needed to create and maintain a safe learning environment for all students. Just like the funding from Act 143, we are confident that these additional funds will achieve this goal of giving more Wisconsin schools the chance to further enhance and update their safety measures. Much like the previous legislation that was signed into law, there is a reporting requirement in this bill as well.

According to the Legislative Audit Bureau's report from December 2019, DOJ awarded \$94.5 million in school safety grants over two rounds of funding in 2018 with the remaining \$5.5 million going to support other school safety initiatives like adolescent mental health training. We believe that funding both physical safety and mental health should be addressed with equal seriousness.

I appreciate your time on this matter. I am happy to take your questions.