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WEEK IN REVIEW

STATE AND LOCAL STORIES OF INTEREST

Assembly bill targets 'chaos' around tobacco shop retailer

MILWAUKEE — State Rep. Josh Zepnick, D-Milwaukee, testified Jan. 7 in support of a bill aimed at regulating tobacco sellers, saying disruption from unchecked businesses could happen in his South Side district.

"Across my district there are 100 tobacco retailers, often located near small businesses, senior public housing and family neighborhoods. I have heard from community groups and businesses who fear a situation similar to that of the 18th District and the proximity of these retailers to both families and businesses," Zepnick told the Assembly Committee on Judiciary.

Rep. Evan Goyke, D-Milwaukee, whose 18th Assembly District has a store selling only tobacco products, he called the business a magnet for crime and disorder. "Because of a loophole in Wisconsin law, our local government cannot hold the store owner accountable for the resulting chaos," Goyke said.

The prohibited activities listed in Assembly Bill 628 include keeping disorderly, unsanitary, or indecent property, allowing criminals or prostitutes to loiter, personally being involved with the illegal sale of controlled substances, or allowing another to do the same on premises.