



90th Assembly District
REP. KARL VAN ROY

Legislative Update

February 24, 2006

The Week in Review

The Capitol kicked into high gear this week, as the legislature met for floor sessions on Tuesday and Thursday and held several committee hearings on Wednesday. Several of the bills I have personally authored saw a lot of legislative action this week, so I thought I would take the opportunity to report on those.

AB 868 - Cat Islands

On Tuesday, the Assembly passed a bill I authored with Rep. Judy Krawczyk which helps to restore the Cat Islands in Green Bay. The bill grants to Brown County the rights and title to the dry and submerged land where the islands used to be. The islands, which had protected a large expanse of shallow Bay waters and wetlands, eroded after a series of severe storms in the 1970s. Their absence has been an environmental detriment to the area.

In 1988, the Lower Green Bay/Fox River Remedial Action Plan Workgroup recommended restoring the chain to its pre-wash out configuration. When Brown County Port and Solid Waste Director Charles Larscheid requested legislation to help Brown County move forward with the restoration, we knew it was the right thing to do. Restoring the Cat Islands will improve fish-spawning areas, protect wetlands and wildlife in the area, and bolster eco-tourism.

AB 868 still needs to be voted on the Senate floor before it can become law.

AB 619 - Wine Doggy Bags

On Thursday, the Senate concurred with AB 619, the Wine Doggy Bag bill, a bill I authored which treats adults as adults and allows restaurant consumers to take home an unfinished bottle of wine after dining out. The bill requires that a restaurant re-cork the bottle and provide a dated receipt showing purchase of the wine with dinner. By allowing people to take their bottle home at the end of the night, AB 619 aims to help small businesses through increased wine sales and to reduce drunk driving, as people will not feel pressured to finish their bottle of wine to get their money's worth out of their purchase.

AB 619 now awaits the Governor's signature to make it law.

AB 748 - Protecting Power Lines & Pocket Books

A bill I authored to protect against vandalism of power and telecommunications equipment met with approval in the State Senate on Tuesday. AB 748 prohibits individuals from shooting at the lines and provides a penalty for it. Under the bill, individuals who shoot at and damage the power and telecommunications equipment must pay a fine, pay the cost to replace or repair the damage caused, and will have their hunting license revoked for one year.

The Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS) reports that more than \$180,000 worth of damage has been caused by gunshots to their power lines alone since 1994. The potential for damage has increased with the advent of dove hunting in Wisconsin, since many of the incidents arise from hunters shooting at birds roosting on power lines. The statewide financial impact is even greater when the cost to other energy and communications companies is considered. Currently, these companies have little recourse to get compensation for this type of damage and end up passing costs along to consumers. With the help of AB 748, the person who takes the shot will pay the price.

Other groups such as the Electrical Workers Union and the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association support the bill because they feel it improves working conditions and firearm safety respectively.

AB 619 now awaits the Governor's signature to make it law.

AB 792 - Home Care Consumer & Worker Protection Act

A bill I call the Home Care Consumer & Worker Protection Act unanimously passed a Senate committee on Wednesday. The use of private duty home care is soaring as our population ages and more people are striving to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. My legislation addresses concerns about consumer and worker risks associated with using home care registries and placement agencies for home care services.

The problem is that workers and consumers are not told by the registries and placement agencies that the workers and consumers are responsible for a whole host of legal duties such as paying state and federal taxes, social security, worker's compensation, and liability insurance, among others. They falsely think that the agency or registry is responsible for these things, but they aren't, and this can get consumers and workers into trouble. The government may come after them with penalties and interest for back taxes. A worker who gets hurt in a client's home may sue the homeowner for compensation after they realize they aren't covered by worker's compensation.

My bill requires these placement agencies and registries to fully disclose to the workers and consumers they match together what legal responsibilities they have so they can be knowledgeable when making their home care decisions. If the company fails to disclose this information and a worker or consumer incurs legal trouble down the road because they didn't know their legal duty, the state can recover money from the company through informal means or by filing a lawsuit on behalf of the consumer or worker. This bill is supported by numerous aging and disability organizations.

AB 792 now awaits scheduling for a vote on the Senate floor.

To remove your name from my list, please [click here](#).

**For questions or concerns on any state issues,
please contact me toll free at 1-888-534-0090
or via e-mail at Rep.Van_Roy@legis.state.wi.us**