

Family celebrates signing of bill

Law increases penalty for hidden cameras

BY JILL TATGE-ROZELL

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MADISON — A profound sense of satisfaction came over Christina Walker and her daughter Mia Wednesday as they watched Gov. Scott Walker sign a bill into law.

That law makes taking clandestine images of children — like those taken by a hidden video camera in a locker at a Pleasant Prairie recreation center — a felony.

It is a law they fought to get passed after they discovered the hidden video camera in the women's locker room at the RecPlex. The ensuing investigation uncovered more than 200 hours of video from multiple locations, involving countless victims.

Mia was 10 at the time. When the Walkers learned the charges against the perpetrators would be no differ-

ent than if Mia were an adult, they felt motivated to change the law.

"I started to tear up because I just knew that this is something we worked hard for," Christina said after the signing. "I knew from the minute I found out the law did not protect children that I would not stop until something was changed."

Mia, who was 11 when she testified on behalf of the bill, said Wednesday that seeing it signed into law was "amazing."

"I felt like I made a difference," Mia, now 12, said. "My main reason for speaking up is that I never wanted another child to feel the same way I felt. I am hoping that this stronger penalty will prevent another child from being a victim."

Christina credited the Pleasant Prairie Police Department, the Ken-

osh County District Attorney's Office and authors of the bill, Rep. Samantha Kerkman, R-Salem, and Sen. Van Wanggaard, R-Racine, for helping them accomplish their goal.

'A different world'

"It's a different world than when these statutes were first written," Kerkman said. "Digital camera technology makes it all too easy for perpetrators to capture clandestine images, and the Internet provides a truly frightening potential lifespan for those illicit nude photos and videos. Our children deserve better protections against those who seek to exploit them."

Act 320 increases the penalty for taking nude or partially nude photos or videos of a minor from a Class B misdemeanor (up to \$1,000 and/or 90 days in jail) to a Class I felony (up to \$10,000 and/or up to 3.5 years).

It increases the penalty for taking



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Christina Walker, left, and her daughter Mia are shown testifying about finding a hidden video camera in a locker room at the RecPlex. At right are state Sen. Van Wanggaard, R-Racine, and state Rep. Samantha Kerkman, R-Salem.

photos or videos of nude or partially nude adults in a locker room from a Class B misdemeanor to a Class A misdemeanor (up to \$10,000 and/or up to 9 months in jail).

If the perpetrator also distributes the photos or videos, the penalties increase from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class I felony for adult victims, and from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class H felony (up to \$10,000 and/or up to 6 years) for minor victims.

Additionally, for all other types of invasion of privacy offenses and cap-

turing nudity offenses, the penalties are increased by one level of severity when the victim is a minor.

"These actions are reprehensible, but become even more despicable when these videos are taken of children," Wanggaard said. "Our children cannot protect themselves, and this bill stiffens penalties to help shield Wisconsin children from predators."

"People have got to know it is not something they are going to get away with."