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### Schimmel, Cowles Release Justice for Children Package

**Madison-** Today, Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), with Attorney General Brad Schimmel and Representatives Heaton, Macco, Murtha, and Tranel announced plans to address the growing problems of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault; introducing the Justice for Children package. The package of bills aims to protect Wisconsin's children from such horrible crimes.

"I hope to ensure that children, who are the victims of such terrible crimes, are protected in Wisconsin and receive justice against those who have wronged them. Every Child has the right to a violence-free and safe childhood. Abuse and neglect have no place in a child's life. Researching these crimes it was evident that something needed to be done to address the increase in cases of abuse, neglect, and sexual assault," said Senator Cowles (R-Green Bay).

"It is time for us to recognize the need to provide stronger tools to address these crimes and the legislation and resources we are announcing today will help Wisconsin to do the best it can to protect our children," Schimmel said. "My experience as a prosecutor included countless child abuse and neglect cases. In that work, I saw firsthand how child abuse and neglect often do irreparable harm to children and families. Worse, the fallout from that abuse and neglect often is passed from generation to generation. We have no higher responsibility in government than to protect our children."

Following is a short summary of each of the four bills that will be circulated for co-sponsorship this session:

1. LRB-1942/6- This bill changes the current statutes to better define what the intent of neglect is and makes it easier for District Attorneys to explain to a jury. This bill also creates a crime of repeated acts of neglect of the same child. This change was modeled after repeated acts of sexual abuse to allow prosecutors the tools necessary to address those who have neglected the same child in numerous instances.
2. LRB-2015/1-While child abuse and child neglect are both felonies in the State of Wisconsin, neither of these crimes are referred to law enforcement. This legislation requires that any suspected or threatened child abuse or neglect instances be referred to law enforcement. This bill aligns law enforcement and Child Protective Services to work as partners to substantiate allegations of abuse and neglect by using greater investigative power and experience to help Wisconsin's children.
3. LRB- 1327/2- Research has shown that sexual assault survivors who received services from sexual assault advocates had more positive outcomes and experienced less distress. This legislation works to partner with victim advocates by giving them closer access to survivors and make them a more important part of the treatment for sexual violence survivors to work towards better outcomes for survivors.
4. LRB- 2516/1-This bill creates the crime of repeated acts of physical abuse of the same child. As children are often not the best with times and dates, this legislation gives District Attorneys the ability to set time periods for when instances of abuse have occurred and levy the crime of repeated acts of physical abuse of the same child.

"I urge all of my legislative colleagues to co-sponsor this legislation to help protect Wisconsin's children," Cowles said. "I wish to thank the Attorney General, the Department of Justice, and Wisconsin Coalition against Sexual Assault, victim advocates, Wisconsin's District Attorneys, law enforcement and my Assembly counterparts for their hard work to address these problems."

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