



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GOVERNOR SIGNS “ETHAN’S LAW”

Jacque-Tittl legislation honors the memory of Ethan Hauschultz by protecting children at risk from dangerous placements

MADISON... Children in protective care will no longer be placed with admitted child abusers under “Ethan’s Law,” which Gov. Evers approved today in a State Capitol signing ceremony.

The co-authors of the legislation, State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), and State Rep. Paul Tittl (R-Manitowoc), said the new law closes legal loopholes which led to the brutal death of Ethan Hauschultz. The seven-year-old Manitowoc boy suffered a deadly pattern of cruel abuse at the home where he was lawfully placed by county workers, despite a lengthy record of violence by his designated ‘caregiver’.

“What happened to Ethan is unbelievably tragic,” Sen. Jacque said. “If the loopholes didn’t exist, Ethan and his two siblings could not have been placed in this home, and presumably Ethan would still be alive today. The system failed him, and we owe it to his memory to put proper guidelines in place.”

The children were placed with a great uncle who had been found guilty of felony child abuse in 2009, among several other violent past offenses. But because of a plea bargain, his record showed the conviction as disorderly conduct, a non-violent misdemeanor.

Under the Jacque-Tittl bill signed by the Governor, human services workers could not lawfully place a child with any adult who had been found guilty of abusing a child, entered a plea of “no contest” to a child-abuse charge, or plea-bargained that crime down to a lesser offense.

“Ethan’s Law’ will hopefully bring some justice to the terrible suffering he underwent that led to his death, and protect children in the future,” said Rep. Tittl.

“Red flags were everywhere - this gap in the law basically took Ethan’s life,” Sen. Jacque said. “This change will protect children by setting a clear standard for Child Protective Services to avoid removing children from a difficult situation, only to put them in harm’s way.”

Rep. Tittl and Sen. Jacque thanked Gov. Evers for signing Ethan’s Law (Assembly Bill 26/Senate Bill 24).

“Ethan’s senseless, preventable murder highlights the vulnerability of our children, and I am glad the Governor accepted this statutory change,” Sen. Jacque said.

“This new law will safeguard a child’s welfare when the adults who are supposed to fail to do so,” Rep. Tittl said.

The bipartisan measure passed both Houses of the Legislature with no recorded opposition. It also passed 12-0 in the Assembly Committee on Children and Families and 5-0 in the Senate Committee on Human Services, Children and Families.

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