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SEN. JACQUE'S BILL TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SAFETY IN CAMPGROUNDS HEADS TO GOVERNOR'S DESK

Legislation ensures law enforcement can assist in removing disruptive or dangerous individuals from campgrounds

MADISON, WI — Legislation clarifying that campground guests in Wisconsin are not tenants under landlord-tenant law—and that law enforcement may assist in their removal when necessary—is now headed to the Governor's desk following concurrence by the full State Assembly.

[Senate Bill 235](#), authored by State Senator André Jacque (R–New Franken), responds to growing concerns from campground owners and public safety officials about the lack of legal clarity when dealing with disruptive or dangerous individuals on campground property.

“Campgrounds offer temporary accommodations, not permanent residences,” said Sen. Jacque. “This bill ensures that when serious issues arise—such as harassment, threats to guests, or refusal to vacate—owners can rely on local law enforcement for help, just as they could at a hotel or tavern.”

The legislation offers clarity and was introduced after multiple cases in which law enforcement declined to assist in removing individuals from campgrounds, mistakenly treating the situations as civil landlord-tenant disputes. In one such case, two terminated employee-guests refused to leave a campground, and law enforcement would not intervene despite the agreement clearly stating no tenancy existed.

Sen. Jacque noted that such misinterpretations have delayed response to serious safety concerns, including instances involving threats, violence, and harassment, as well as identified sex offenders from other states. The legislation affirms that campground operators, who are licensed for short-term lodging, do not establish tenancies with their guests.

“This is about ensuring public safety and protecting the rights of all campers,” Jacque said. “Campground agreements are clear—guests do not receive a lease, tenancy, or other housing rights. When someone becomes disruptive or refuses to leave, it is a matter of criminal trespass, not civil eviction.”

A key provision of the bill references existing trespass law (§943.13), giving law enforcement the discretion to issue citations or remove individuals without requiring arrests in every situation. This change was made in consultation with law enforcement and campground owners to provide flexibility while still ensuring safety. The legislation passed committees in both legislative chambers with unanimous votes before floor approval by voice vote, and is formally supported by the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association.

“We’ve taken care to ensure this isn’t about criminalizing behavior unnecessarily—it’s about restoring order when needed,” said Jacque. “The goal is to avoid conflict and provide clear guidance so everyone—owners, guests, and law enforcement—understands their roles.”

The legislation passed the Senate last week; it must next be signed by the Governor to become law.

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin's First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.