



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MORE PROTECTION ON THE WAY FOR CYBERSTALKING VICTIMS

Tusler-Jacque bill modernizing the law for today's technologies heads to Governor's desk

MADISON... More protection for future cyberstalking victims is a signature away after the State Assembly today gave final passage to a bill expanding the legal definition of the crime in a xx-xx vote. The legislation ([Senate Bill 85/Assembly Bill 83](#)) overwhelmingly passed the State Senate last month.

The Cyberstalking Protection Act, co-authored by State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere) and State Rep. Ron Tusler, updates statutes to include modern social media communications. While cyberstalking cases can be prosecuted under current law, this bill expands Wisconsin's stalking statutes to specifically include text messages, email, web applications, and social media.

The authors drafted the legislation at the request of Ms. Nikie Offield of Green Bay, whose family was victimized by this crime. But the stalking charge against the offender was dismissed due to a loophole that the phone never rang, even though the accused sent the victim thousands of harassing text messages.

"I am very grateful to see this bill get signed into law," Ms. Offield said. "If it can help one victim receive justice it was worth it. Thanks to Sen. Jacque, Rep. Tusler, and all who made this happen."

"Our bill explicitly includes electronic means," said Rep. Tusler. "This is a constructive addition, as texting and other forms of messaging on a variety of platforms and applications have become pervasive in society. For victims of cyberstalking, the message may be electronic but the fear is real."

The measure also includes language requested by prosecutors that takes into account jury instructions in related case law and updates the stalking definition so victims are able to be more fully protected under Wisconsin statutes. The legislation is supported by End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin and has been vetted by the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

"This legislation provides stronger protection for victims - and reduces the risk of frivolous defense challenges - by clearly defining specific behaviors as stalking to close any legal loopholes," Sen. Jacque said. "This common sense legislation will help keep Wisconsinites safe as technology continues to evolve."

Rep. Tusler and Sen. Jacque said they hoped Gov. Evers would quickly sign the bill into law.