



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Assembly Approves Bipartisan Alternative Drug Treatment Program

MADISON – On the first floor period of the spring session, the Wisconsin State Assembly approved [legislation](#) that will pave the way for counties across the state to implement family drug treatment court programs. The legislation, authored by Representatives Jessie Rodriguez (R-Oak Creek) and Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee), create the infrastructure for an alternative drug rehabilitation program that focuses on developing sober households.

“All throughout the state and in every community we are witnessing the harmful effects of the drug epidemic, tearing families apart and depriving children of growing up in a loving, safe home,” said Rodriguez. “The family drug treatment court is an innovative program that will save lives by creating a path for people suffering from addiction to get the help they need to maintain a sober household that is safe for their children.”

The family drug treatment court is an alternative drug rehabilitation program currently in use in more than 300 communities around the country. The court brings together social workers, attorneys, the judge and participants for a discussion focused on treatment and steps to reunifying the parent with children who have been removed from the home.

“Family treatment courts and juvenile treatment courts are proven models that help individuals break the cycle of addiction, keep our communities safe, and save taxpayer dollars. I am proud to have worked on this legislation for two consecutive sessions following its introduction from a 2013 session Legislative Council Study Committee I served as Vice-Chair on with former Rep. Gary Bies,” said Goyke.

Milwaukee County was the first in Wisconsin to use the program. Since its inception in 2011 it has yielded tremendous success providing treatment to more than 260 families in need.

Developed by a bipartisan legislative study committee led by former Rep. Gary Bies and Goyke in 2015, the proposal passed the Assembly with unanimous approval last session but failed to garner support in the Senate.

“I would like to thank my colleagues for their support in getting this important legislation accomplished. This bill will help save lives, repair families in need, and is another important step in combatting drug addiction in Wisconsin,” said Goyke.

“Last summer, Rep. Goyke and I attended a family drug treatment court hearing in Milwaukee. Sitting through the hearings it was clear that lost in this epidemic is the harsh reality that children are losing their parents and being placed in the foster care system. This legislation gives us another tool to begin reversing this trend and I look forward to it becoming law in the coming days,” said Rodriguez.

Although the legislation does not include funding, instead creating infrastructure for the program, DCF will have the opportunity to request funding in future budget requests.

The bill passed the Wisconsin State Senate unanimously last fall and now awaits Governor Walker's signature.

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