



TODD NOVAK

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 51ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-7502
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0051
Rep.Novak@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

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Contact: Rep. Todd Novak
(608) 266-7502

Bill to Educate Students on Safe Haven Laws Moves to the Governor

MADISON – A bill that would add the teaching of Wisconsin’s Safe Haven laws for health classes in schools authored by Rep. Todd Novak (Dodgeville) and State Sen. Joan Ballweg (Markesan) passed the Senate and the full Assembly on a unanimous bipartisan vote. The bill will now advance to the Governor for his signature.

"We’ve worked to move this proposal swiftly through the legislative process. Having now passed both chambers with unanimous support, I would expect the Governor to act quickly to sign these changes into law." said Novak.

Rep. Novak worked with members of the Green County Abuse Prevention Team and Green County District Attorney Craig Nolen when formulating this bill following a tragic incident this past winter.

“This bill comes in response to a tragedy involving a newborn baby, Harper, who was found murdered earlier this year in Green County.” said Novak. “I heard from community members following Harper’s death and worked to draft legislation in response. These important changes will increase awareness of Safe Haven laws for young people who may be experiencing a crisis.”

Wisconsin’s Safe Haven laws allow newborn children to be relinquished to police officers, emergency responders, and hospital workers without legal consequence if the child is less than 72 hours old. Once the child has been relinquished an adoption can be facilitated. Under the recently passed bill, there will be an educational component incorporated into health classes to ensure individuals are taught about the current law.

The bipartisan bill has garnered the support of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and many education groups including the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators, Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance, Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials, Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators, Wisconsin Association of School Personnel Administrators, and the Wisconsin Council for Administrators of Special Services.

Rep. Novak can be reached at (608) 266-7502 or by email at Rep.Novak@legis.wisconsin.gov. Additional information on Rep. Novak can be found at his website RepNovak.com.

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