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Rep. Billings Statement on Bills Receiving Public Hearings

Madison – This week, one bill and one Senate companion of a bill introduced by Representative Billings received consideration in public hearings in the Assembly Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee and the Senate Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, Children & Families Committee. Representative Billings released the following statement:

“I was pleased that two of my bills, AB 950/SB 875 and AB 976, received consideration in public hearings in the legislature this week. I am hopeful that these bills will continue to move forward through the legislative process and receive a vote before the end of this session.”

“AB 950/SB 875 explicitly allows xylazine test strips in Wisconsin. Xylazine, which is commonly known as tranq, is a veterinary tranquilizer that is not approved for human use but is occasionally mixed with other illicit drugs. While a potentially deadly opioid overdose may be reversible with naloxone, xylazine overdoses are not reversible. Fentanyl laced with xylazine has been found in communities across the state and the first fatal overdose involving tranq occurred in October of 2023.”

“While the legislature successfully legalized fentanyl test strips last session, tranq test strips, which can prevent fatal overdoses that cannot be reversed, are not explicitly allowed in Wisconsin. This bill is a common-sense step to address a growing problem in our state and help protect Wisconsinites from overdoses.”

“AB 976 was introduced as part of the results of the Human Trafficking Task Force. Over the last few months, my colleagues on the task force and I have heard from countless members of law enforcement, survivors, and advocates about how to combat trafficking, support survivors, and get justice for victims in the courts. We specifically heard about how difficult it can be for survivors to testify. Sitting in the same courtroom with a trafficker who has abused and exploited an individual is difficult for any victim, but it is particularly overwhelming and distressing for children. AB 976 would expand Wisconsin law, which currently allows children under 16 to testify remotely, to include 16 and 17 year old children testifying in trafficking cases.”

“By expanding our laws to allow more victims under 18 to testify remotely, we will join nine states with similar laws and help victims testify without compounding their suffering and help law enforcement prosecute traffickers. I appreciate the support of task force chair Representative O’Connor and vice chair Representative Emerson, who are among the 40 Assembly members cosponsoring this legislation.”

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