

'Locker room bill' to governor

Measure toughens penalties for secret video, photos

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The state Senate Tuesday night approved legislation that will make invasion of privacy involving adults and children felony violations with enhanced penalties.

The Senate, on a voice vote, concurred with similar legislation on the Locker Room Privacy bill authored by state Rep. Samantha Kerkman, R-Salem, which was approved in the

Assembly earlier. The measure in the Senate was co-sponsored by Sen. Van Wanggaard, R-Racine, and Sen. Robert Wirch, D-Somers. It now goes to Gov. Scott Walker for final action.

Currently, taking photos or video of a nude person in a locker room is a Class B misdemeanor, whether of a child or adult. According to the Senate bill, such an offense would become a felony.

If the crime involves a

child, the perpetrator faces a fine of up to \$10,000, a prison term of up to six years, or both; if the victim is an adult, the maximum prison term would be three years.

Local case

The legislation came in response to the hidden-camera case in Kenosha County in which women and children were secretly video-taped in the locker room of the Pleasant Prairie RecPlex.

Because many of the victims were children, the legislation focuses on increasing penalties for offenses related to peeping and depicting nudity when the victim is

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under 18 years old, according to Kerkman.

"The locker room case really highlighted our vulnerabilities and the vulnerabilities of our children in the digital age," Kerkman said in a news release.

"It was literally obscene to find that someone who secretly photographed or videotaped others — including children — nude in a locker room could have faced penalties as low as a Class B misdemeanor."

Wanggaard echoed Kerkman's comments.

"These actions are reprehensible, but become even more despicable when these videos are taken of children. Our children cannot protect themselves, and this bill stiffens penalties to help shield Wisconsin children from predators," he said.

During committee hearings, Kerkman was joined in support of the bill by Pleasant Prairie Police Chief David Smetana, resident Christina Walker and Christina's daughter, who discovered the hidden cameras and was also a victim.

According to police, 47 victims in the Pleasant Prairie case were identified, with some as young as 6 years old.