



MELISSA AGARD
STATE SENATOR

DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY

Room 122 South
State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

September 25, 2023

Dear Senator Wanggaard,

As the chairperson for the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, we are writing to you today to respectfully request a public hearing for Senate Bill 414, a bill to permit a person to file a special motion to strike a strategic lawsuit against public participation.

In light of recent events in Wisconsin and throughout the nation, it is imperative to follow the lead of more than 30 other states and enact anti-SLAPP legislation. SLAPP lawsuits are a weapon used by the powerful and well-connected in an attempt to intimidate or censor critics, activists, journalists and others with a stifling financial burden. We must honor the First Amendment and protect the media's ability to report on matters of public concern without undue legal pressure and extraordinary financial costs because of a meritless lawsuit.

Maintaining a strong, unfettered press is essential for a strong, healthy democracy. Journalists play a crucial role in our system of government, maintaining a well-informed citizenry and speaking truth to power. Our democracy cannot function as long as the powerful can shield themselves from criticism by wielding bogus legal threats against citizens, journalists, or media representatives that wish to hold them accountable and pursue the truth to the fullest extent.

We are proud to author this legislation to protect our fundamental First Amendment rights. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us – we would be more than happy to provide any additional resources or information regarding SB 414, and would likewise be glad to sit down to discuss the bill in further detail. Thank you for your time and consideration.

In Service,

Handwritten signature of Melissa Agard in black ink.

Melissa Agard
State Senator
16th Senate District

Handwritten signature of Jimmy Anderson in black ink.

Jimmy Anderson
State Representative
47th Assembly District