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February 20, 2024

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SEN. JACQUE LEGISLATION FOR ‘PROBLEM-SOLVING’ COURTS CLEARS SENATE

Initiatives reduce recidivism and promote efficient dispute resolution

MADISON, WI... Legislation promoting efficiency and enhancing public safety in our justice system by establishing specialized ‘problem-solving courts in state law, and providing mental health treatment to offenders, cleared the State Senate today.

“Specialized, problem-solving courts - for drug treatment, OWI offenses, commercial disputes and others – have grown rapidly throughout the justice system,” said State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), author of the measures. “These courts work across multiple disciplines and institutions to use interventions that treat offenders while also holding them accountable for their criminal actions.”

[Senate Bill 275, Treatment and Commercial Courts](#)

Sen. Jacque said substance addiction treatment courts enable non-violent offenders to voluntarily participate and receive drug treatment services instead of a jail or prison sentence. This bill passed in a voice vote.

“The intent is to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and relieve pressure on the court system by focusing our criminal justice resources on violent offenders who pose the greatest risk and must be removed from our communities,” Sen Jacque said.

Similarly, Sen. Jacque said the bill also provides for the statutory establishment of commercial courts, established in a 2017 Wisconsin Supreme Court pilot project dedicating circuit court judicial dockets for large-claim commercial cases. The Court has reauthorized and expanded it twice since in 2020 and 2022, with a current expiration date of July 30, 2024.

“The lack of specific authorization for treatment courts and business courts by state rule or statute leaves their future uncertain,” Sen. Jacque said. “Legislative action to recognize treatment and commercial courts within state statute will put in place a permanent system proven to reduce recidivism, and aid the efficient resolution of commercial disputes and help provide more certainty for our economy.”

[Senate Bill 11, Expanding the TAD Grant Program to include mental health treatment](#)

Sen. Jacque said that, since its creation in 2005 Act 25, Wisconsin’s Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Grant Program has provided effective alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders who need treatment for substance abuse and addiction. The TAD program currently operates in approximately 50 counties and in two tribes. This bill passed the Senate 29-3.

“The bill expands this program to include those who have a mental health diagnosis,” Sen. Jacque said. “According to the Wisconsin Department of Justice, 97% of TAD graduates stayed out of state prison after completing their TAD program.”

Both bills must now pass the Assembly and be signed by the Governor to become law.

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.