

STANDING COMMITTEES:  
Energy, Consumer Protection, and  
Government Reform, Chair  
State and Federal Relations, Vice-Chair  
Transportation, Public Safety,  
and Veterans and Military affairs



JOINT COMMITTEES  
Joint Audit Committee, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Information Policy  
and Technology

April 19, 2016

NEWS RELEASE:  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More information:  
Senator Cowles  
608-266-0484

## **Justice for Children Bills Signed into Law**

*Bills will help children who have been abused and neglected*

GREEN BAY-Today, Governor Walker signed Senate Bill 325 and Assembly Bill 667 into law at the Brown County Sheriff's Headquarters. Senator Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay), the author of both pieces of legislation, stated "Over the past year, the Department of Justice, the Attorney General, law enforcement, advocacy groups and I collaborated on the "Justice for Children" package to fight against child abuse and neglect to provide them with an opportunity for justice from their abusers. Today as these bills become law, prosecutors and social workers have new tools and strategies on the front lines to help these children in need".

Senate Bill 325 creates a new crime of repeated acts of physical abuse of the same child. This law is modeled after the current crime of repeated act of sexual abuse of the same child. When children are the continuously victimized the details of specific instances are often lost. This gives a district attorney a new tool which allows a jury to unanimously decide if actions constituting physical abuse can be considered repeated acts and levy a greater penalty.

Assembly Bill 667 required that the Department of Children and Families develop and implement a plan to improve in the practices used to investigate reports of abuse or neglect involving children with disabilities. During the passionate testimony heard during the Justice for Children public hearings, it was clear that children with disabilities were being abused and neglected at a much higher rate than other children. Even more problematic was there were no strategies tailored to the investigation of abuse or neglect reports involving children with disabilities that include forensic interviewing strategies for children with communication issues. This has resulted in numerous children, unable to communicate their abuse to those there to help them, staying in these toxic environment and continuing to be abused.

"I hope that these bills with help children who have been abused and neglected find justice. It is unconscionable that someone would ever harm a child. Children have the right to live a safe and happy childhood free of abuse and neglect," Senator Cowles (R-Green Bay) continued.

###

---

**Office:**  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707-7882  
608-266-0484

Toll-free Hotline: 1-800-334-1465  
Fax: 608-267-0304  
Sen.Cowles@legis.wisconsin.gov

**Home:**  
300 W. St. Joseph Street  
Green Bay, WI 54301-2328  
920-448-5092  
Fax: 920-448-5093