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THROUGH THE LENS



Senator Taylor meets with constituents to discuss issues important to them.

4th Senate District LEGISLATIVE UPDATE SENATOR LENA C. TAYLOR

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 21 - SEPTEMBER 25

Welcome to my Legislative Update!

I'm State Senator Lena C. Taylor and this is my legislative update. If you do not wish to receive my weekly update, please let me know at sen.taylor@legis.wisconsin.gov.

-AB 283 Passes Assembly-

On Wednesday, September 16, 2009, the Wisconsin Assembly passed AB 283. This was a major step for the State of Wisconsin as it relates to OWI policy. The bill as it was passed, includes closing the .08-.10 loopholes, making the 1st offense a Class H felony if a child is present, making a second offense a Class H felony if injury is caused, and making a 4th offense a Class H felony if it occurs within five years of a prior offense. Prevention initiatives are built into the bill to include ignition interlock devices (IID) for first time offenders if their BAC was over .15, making IIDs mandatory on every vehicle owned for 2nd offenses, and allowing for a sentence reduction for alcohol/drug treatment. Lastly, 20 million dollars annually will be made available for treatment which comes from an increase in the structural deficit. Treatment for Sentence Reduction (SAFE STREETS) will also be made available immediately on the effective date of the bill for second offenses.

-Sex Offender E-Disclosure Act-

This past Wednesday, the Sex Offender E-Disclosure Act took one more step to getting signed into law. The Assembly Corrections and Courts Committee held a public hearing on the bill, which I testified at along with Rep. Andy Jorgenson (D-Fort Atkinson). The Senate will hold its hearing very soon.

With the advent of Facebook, Twitter, and now "sexting" – the act of sending a pornographic or nude image via text message, one in five children in American receives an on-line sexual solicitation. It is true that good parenting is the first step in preventing children from being solicited by predators, but the Legislature and Administration have a duty to public safety. To meet this new and growing threat, the Sex Offender E-Disclosure Act requires that registered sex offenders would have to provide to the registry any personal e-mail accounts, Internet websites they create or maintain, and all Internet profiles and user names. To safeguard our children, it is appropriate that supervision agents have knowledge of what aliases an offender could be using. Currently in Wisconsin, those required to register as sex offenders must provide the Department of Corrections with their fingerprints, a recent photograph, the addresses where they reside, place of employment, and any school in which they are enrolled.

To safeguard against public witch-hunting or hampering business efforts we have included two important provisions. One, this information would not be made public, but it would be maintained in the DOC's records. Second, the reporting requirement does not apply to business and commercial internet aliases and screen names. This is to ensure confidential business secrets remain so. In light of the growing technological innovations that reach our children daily, we must keep up in protecting our children. The Sex Offender E-Disclosure Act is a new tool in toolbox of supervision of offenders. It makes good sense that we add that tool immediately.

MANNERS MOMENT



Dana World-Patterson
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Cell phones are great—they keep us in touch with friends and family and can be life savers in an emergency. But they can also be annoying if not used thoughtfully. Remember, it doesn't have to be on all the time and you don't always have to answer it immediately. See article below for the top ten cell phone etiquette.

FROM THE BAR

VIEW, DEMAND OF

In most real and mixed actions, in order to ascertain the identity of land claimed with that in the tenant's possession, the tenant is allowed, after the demandant has counted, to demand a view of the land in question; or if the subject of claim be rent, or the like, a view of the land out of which it issues.

-Domestic Violence Policy-

Two bills that I have authored to protect victims of domestic violence and rape were heard in the Assembly Corrections and Courts this week. There are both supported by the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

One bill, AB 419, authored by myself and Rep. Mark Radcliffe (D-Black River Falls), creates a rape shield law and expands protections offered to victims of sexual abuse. Specifically, AB 419 accomplishes three legislative goals. It creates the civil rape shield law, modeled on the Federal Rules of Evidence, which would limit a defendant's cross examination of a rape victim regarding his or her sexual history. It keeps personally identifiable information about a sexual assault victim listed on a crime victim compensation form confidential. And, the bill prohibits, in any civil action seeking damages, the admission of evidence aiming to prove the victim engaged in other sexual conduct. Presently, evidence from a mental examination that may make the existence of a fact more or less probably is admissible in a court action that involves actions concerning the alleged fact.

I also moved forward on a bill I authored with Rep. Ted Zigmunt (D-Francis Creek) that closes a loophole which allows domestic violence offenders to violate the 72-hour no-contact condition with relative impunity. Currently, under state law, when a defendant posts bail from the jail, he or she signs a conditional release agreement stating the defendant will not contact the victim for 72 hours unless written consent of the victim is filed. If after signing this document, the defendant immediately contacts the victim, the defendant may only be assessed with a forfeiture of up to \$1,000. This is a problem because the defendant cannot be held in custody or further charged with bail-jumping, currently a Class A misdemeanor, because violation of the 72-hour no-contact condition is not defined as a crime. AB 410 would change the 72-hour no-contact statute to provide that a violation of the conditional release is also a Class A misdemeanor.

-Committee Work Continues-

In the midst of busy work days on the Senate floor, the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Corrections, Insurance, Campaign Finance Reform, and Housing has continued its work. This week, we met jointly with our Assembly counterpart committee (Corrections & the Courts) to hear updates on the audit of the Department of Corrections and their mental health delivery system. The Audit Bureau, Department of Corrections, and labor unions all presented testimony on their view of the department's improvements since the audit. Mental health treatment in prisons has led our state to some massive litigation that has cost taxpayers dearly. Our committees are committed to cleaning up that system and saving us taxpayer dollars.

The Senate Committee also took testimony on four bills waiting on Senate action. The first, authored by Sen. Bob Jauch (D-Poplar), allows law enforcement on Madeline Island to charge offenders for late-night trips on the ferry to the mainland. The bill is very limited and only affect 8-9 people per year but current law costs taxpayers of the north shore community very dearly. The committee also took testimony on two bills that will improve the law enforcement activities of Wisconsin's Native-American tribes and is endorsed by the tribes.

The last bill we heard was a bill to increase the homestead exemption along with other items that are exempted from bankruptcy actions and collections. The homestead exemption has not been raised since 1985 and is currently only worth half the value that it is today. The bill would raise that from \$40,000 to \$75,000 and index that value every three years for inflation. Indexing is an important feature so that homeowners do not need to wait on the political will of the Legislature to act on the matter. The bill, SB 259 is supported by the State Bar of Wisconsin, Legal Action of Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Realtor's Association.

HEALTH CORNER



A few health tips to help you live smarter and feel better.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE SWINE FLU?

Officials are preparing for a resurgence of H1N1, more popularly known as the "swine flu." With children gearing up and returning to school, it is important to remind them to wash their hands, use hand sanitizer, and to cover their mouths when they sneeze or cough.

WORD OF THE WEEK

When God speaks, oftentimes His voice will call for an act of courage on our part.

-- Charles Stanley

-Intern Spotlight-



Hi! My name is Jessica Polsky and this is my first semester interning in State Senator Taylor's office. I am in my last semester at the University of Wisconsin and while I am majoring in Art History, I have a history in journalism having covered state issues for The Badger Herald for about two years before coming to the Capitol. Growing up in Washington D.C. I was always interested in politics and am really excited to see and experience government first hand this semester. My interest in the impact of public policy and governmental social programs, however, peaked last year while I was living in South Africa. By participating in a South African federal tutoring program, I learned how effective government can be at organizing people and finding help for those in need. I have really enjoyed my time at Senator Taylor's office thus far working with constituents and helping those in the Department of Corrections. This internship is a great opportunity for me in my last semester and has already helped me make decisions about my future career path.

-Cell Phone Etiquette-

1. Be the master of your phone, not a slave to it!
2. Speak softly.
3. Be courteous to those you are with; turn off your phone if it will be interrupting a conversation or activity.
4. Watch your language, especially when others can overhear you.
5. Avoid talking about personal problems in a public place.
6. If it must be on and it could bother others, use the silent ring mode and move away to talk.
7. Don't make calls in a library, theater, church or from your table in a restaurant.
8. Don't text during class or a meeting at your job.
9. Private info can be forwarded, so don't text it.
NEVER drive and phone at the same time.

-Fall Session in Full Swing-

This week, the State Senate went into session again on the fall floor-period to take up a myriad of bills that have made their way through the legislative process. The Senate normally acts on 5-6 appointments to various board and agencies, 3-4 resolutions, and 10 or so bills on a given day on the floor. Appointments made by the Governor require the consent of the Senate, and of course legislation requires the approval of both houses, the Senate and Assembly, to pass and reach the Governor's desk.

Tuesday, we passed a bill, Senate Bill 89 which extends the requirement to attend kindergarten to 5 year olds. While much of the state already sees 5 year olds attend kindergarten, it is not a point of law and about 300-400 children a year try to start 1st grade without attending kindergarten. This bill moves the date for kindergarten to 5 year olds. However, it is not a mandate on families, as parent can continue to exercise their parental rights and hold a child back if they choose.

Also during our floor period we took up bills that ban the use of mercury products in schools and public places, thereby reducing the environmental and public health issues that these create. Another bill would have created a structure for succession in the Legislature in the event of a great military or natural disaster was tabled due to concerns about the list of successors being made public or not. I expect that changes will be worked out and a bill will come forward to the Legislature.

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Community Events

What: Bottomless Closet Bag Sale!
When: Saturday, September 26
Where: 6040 West Lisbon - Milwaukee

Info: Stuff all the clothing you want into the bag!

Designer Clothing = \$20 per bag
Other Clothing = \$10 per bag

Must purchase bags. Don't miss this!

What: Stargazing Extravaganza
When: Sept. 25 and 26

Where: Greenfield Park—124th Street, Between Lincoln and National Aves

Info: 100 Telescopes to celebrate the International Year of Astronomy.

If an organization you belong to has an event you feel should be included in the Community Events section please [e-mail](#) me.

Do you have a computer? **Do you need help with food, prescriptions, or other services?** Use www.access.wi.gov to see if you and your family are eligible for a variety of state-sponsored services designed to assist citizens in procuring essential resources.

Useful Resources

Child Support Enforcement 414-278-5160	Elderlink 414-289-6874	Governor Doyle 414-227-4344
Employment Ways to Work Program 414-906-2820	Senior Care Insurance 1-800-657-208	Senior Law (414) 278-1222 (414) 278-7722
Energy Assistance 414-906-2800	Rent Assistance 414-286-5678	Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Prescription Drug Assistance 1-866-456-8211
Food Assistance 414-733-0211	Bureau of Child Welfare 414-220-SAFE	City of Wauwatosa 414-479-8900
GED Program 414-264-6888	W-2 1-800-722-2295	City of Glendale 414-228-1700
Badger Care Insurance 1-800-362-3002	Milwaukee Common Council 414-286-2221	SENATE CONTACTS Sergeant-at-Arms Office 608-266-1801
Milwaukee County Economic Support 414-289-6000	US Congresswoman Gwen Moore 414-297-1140	Human Resources 608-264-8471
Wisconsin Foreclosure Hotline 414-278-1240	US Senator Russ Feingold 414-276-7282	Senate Chief Clerk's Office 608-266-2517
Medicaid 1-800-291-2002	US Senator Herb Kohl 414-297-4451	