



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

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Contact: Rep. Don Vruwink, 266-3790

## Legislation Offers Hope for Suffering Patients

*By Rep. Don Vruwink*

During my three decades of teaching and coaching I had the distinct pleasure of watching hundreds of students grow and mature. One of the rewards of teaching is witnessing the transformation of young children into adulthood and then watching them go on to mentor and lead others.

One family that sticks out for me is the Wendler family. Milt and Kathy Wendler raised four boys through Milton schools – Steve, Dan, Mark and Tim. All four played football and basketball and each played point guard on the basketball team I helped coach.

As parents of athletes go, Milt and Kathy were a coach's dream. Rather than being concerned about playing time and the number of points scored by their sons, Milt and Kathy always emphasized to their boys the importance of making those around them better. That's exactly what the Wendler boys did as point guards on the basketball court. They set up their teammates by running the offense and getting the ball to others so they could score.

They made those around them better.

Tim Wendler continues that philosophy today. In 2013 Tim's wife Trickett was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. Tim and Trickett consulted with some of the leading experts on ALS. They went to Boston, Atlanta and Houston seeking answers and treatments. After two years of pain, struggle and frustration, Trickett passed away, leaving Tim and their three children, Tealyn, 13, Tanner, 11, and Torynn, 9.

Tim acknowledges that there may be no experimental drugs that would have helped Trickett survive, but being able to try such medication would have given the family hope. Time simply was not on her side to be afforded the opportunity to try experimental drugs and treatment not yet approved the Food and Drug Administration.

Tim has given his time and energy to promote federal and state "Right to Try" legislation that would give terminally ill patients access to investigational treatments that have passed basic safety testing of the Food and Drug Administration but are not yet available on pharmacy shelves. Tim and Tealyn testified both in Congress and in the Wisconsin Legislature in support of the bills.

While testifying in front of the Assembly Health Committee on February 15, Tim said the attempts to get Trickett into trials to take drugs not yet on the market “were about as disappointing as you would fear.”

That’s why I’m proud to help Tim by supporting “Right to Try” legislation. This bi-partisan legislation is being sponsored by Representatives Pat Snyder and Joel Kleefisch and Senators Terry Moulton and Fred Risser.

Similar measures have been approved in 33 statehouses nationwide. Under the Wisconsin bill, a terminally ill patient would be granted access to experimental treatment and drugs in a manner not currently available under law. The law would allow but not require manufacturers to make the product available to eligible patients.

Tim’s efforts to help others during this tough, personal time in his life is consistent with how the Wendler boys helped others on the basketball court all those years ago.

I’m proud to give Tim an assist by supporting Wisconsin’s “Right to Try” legislation.

*Rep. Don Vruwink represents the communities of Whitewater, Milton, Edgerton, Footville, part of the Village of Oregon, and several townships. He can be reached by email at [Rep.Vruwink@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Vruwink@legis.wi.gov), by phone at 608-266-3790, and by mail at P.O. Box 8953, Madison, WI 53708.*

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