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State Senator André Jacque (R- De Pere) issued the following statement regarding his vote against SB 175 in committee today:

“I am proud to stand in defense of all human life from conception to natural death. I certainly support the strongest possible protections for children born alive following an abortion attempt and have had the honor of meeting such survivors. While there is some helpful clarification in SB 175, my respect for human life and my conscience informed my decision to vote against the bill in committee today. Several leading pro-life individuals and organizations, including Pro-Life Wisconsin and Wisconsin Family Action, believe that its passage would damage existing protections for born-alive infants unless it is amended.

*I have proposed such an amendment, and while I am disappointed that the authors are currently unwilling to consider such changes, I am hopeful that the bill will still be amended on the floor in a form that I can support. **There is nothing presently in SB 175 that would ensure stronger protections for born-alive infants than what my amendment would ensure.** It states “A parent or guardian of a child born alive may not be held criminally or civilly liable for the actions of a health care provider to which the parent or guardian did not give consent,” – as passed by pro-life Republican legislators in other states earlier this year in bills that avoided the problematic language in SB 175.*

The Democrats’ opposition to strong protections for born-alive children is appalling, but Gov. Evers’ threatened veto of the bill does not justify getting the policy that we are willing to put into state statutes wrong—especially when it would threaten those children’s protections down the road if later enacted in future sessions. I agree with the authors’ response to Gov. Evers that there is no harm in providing additional clarity to a gray area in current law. However, what would the harm be in removing potentially dangerous provisions that do not need to exist? The necessary changes I have proposed do not conflict with their stated intentions for the bill, nor would they lose the bill any support—while allowing the full pro-life movement to embrace the bill without reservations.

*To quote from Wisconsin Family Action’s submitted written testimony on the bill earlier this week, **“Our concern has to do with Section 2 of the bill. We do not believe it is appropriate to give anyone immunity in a situation where a child born alive is intentionally killed, even if that child is born alive as a result of an abortion or attempted abortion. This is a very different situation from providing the mother immunity from prosecution for having the abortion. In essence, this provision in the bill actually allows for infanticide while rightly seeking to prevent infanticide.”***

*Or, as stated by Pro-Life Wisconsin Legislative Director Matt Sande earlier this week, **“We want to ensure that Senate Bill 175 complements current law, not undermines it...this bill unfortunately provides less protection for born-alive children...An anti-infanticide bill inadvertently allows infanticide. This must be corrected.”***

It is my hope that we make the effort to get this right.”

Senator Jacque represents the First Senate District, consisting of Door, Manitowoc, Kewaunee, Brown, Calumet, and Outagamie counties.