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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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May 11, 2021
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ASSEMBLY PASSES JACQUE-MURPHY PADDLEWHEEL BILL TO ALLOW CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING OPTION

Governor gets “do-over” on last year’s veto to stop DOJ harassment of Wisconsin non-profits

MADISON... The State Assembly concurred with the State Senate today in passing legislation to allow the use of paddlewheel raffles by non-profit organizations already allowed charitable gaming licenses, giving Gov. Evers the opportunity for a “do-over” of [his veto last year](#).

State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), Senate co-author of the measure ([Senate Bill 170](#)) with State Rep. Dave Murphy (R- Greenville), said that while paddlewheel raffles are very popular and raise money for important causes throughout the state, charitable groups across Wisconsin may be unknowingly and unintentionally committing a felony-level offense under current law.

“Wisconsin’s many sporting clubs, civic and veterans’ organizations, churches, and numerous other non-profits throughout our state have fun and have supported many charitable causes through paddlewheels,” Sen. Jacque said. Paddlewheels are frequently used for ‘meat raffles,’ a crowd favorite seen at events from church festivals to veteran’s hall fish fries.

However, Sen. Jacque said groups who hold paddlewheel raffles at special events under their raffle license have been informed by Wisconsin’s Department of Justice, at the request of the Department of Administration, that they are fostering illegal gambling and are subject to up to a Class I Felony penalty.

“People are understandably shocked when they find out,” Sen. Jacque said. “Here they are trying to do good in their community, and they find out they may be committing a felony.”

Sen. Jacque said previous legislation he authored a few sessions ago allows for popular raffles such as plastic and rubber duck races at special events to lawfully operate under a Class B raffle license. The winner in the raffle or race must be determined by a “drawing” with all tickets having an “equal opportunity to win.”

“This measure provides similar relief for a Class B raffle license to run paddlewheel raffles without inadvertently committing a Class I Felony,” Sen. Jacque said. “These games are also popular in Minnesota, which has already legalized paddlewheel raffles for charitable groups.”

The State Senate passed its version of the bill last month with bi-partisan support, and the backing of numerous charitable groups. The bill has bi-partisan co-sponsorship. Similar legislation passed both chambers unanimously last session without any registered opposition at any prior point, but was vetoed by [Gov. Evers, who could not give a reason for his veto when questioned](#).

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.

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