



Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 26, 2020

CONTACT: Van Wanggaard

608-266-1832

WANGGAARD UNVEILS PUBLIC SAFETY “PACT”

Legislative Package Focuses on Public Safety and “Police Accountability,
Community Involvement and Transparency”

MADISON – State Senator Van Wanggaard (R-Racine) unveiled a series of legislative proposals today called the Public Safety PACT. The PACT consists of eight bills focused on maintaining high quality and effective law enforcement service, while improving the accountability, community involvement, and transparency of Wisconsin police.

“The overwhelming majority of law enforcement officers do an outstanding job. It’s important to remember, and to say, that,” said Wanggaard, a retired 30-year veteran of the Racine Police Department. “That doesn’t mean policing can’t be improved. The breakdown in trust didn’t occur overnight in some communities, and it won’t be fixed overnight. By increasing accountability, transparency and community involvement, more people will be able to see that good, quality policing is in every community’s best interest.”

“Wisconsin is already a leader when it comes to effective policing and accountability. When looking at what other states are doing in their reform efforts, many are following Wisconsin’s existing model,” said Wanggaard. “This package will continue that leadership, and help improve confidence in Wisconsin law enforcement.”

The PACT has been developed over months, and in some cases, years, of conversations with law enforcement, victims’ advocates, national experts, and Republican and Democratic elected officials, including Governor Evers and Attorney General Kaul. Among the highlights of the legislative package are: a new investigatory review board to identify root causes of use-of-force incidents in order to learn from and prevent them in the future, reforms to the Milwaukee and Madison police and fire oversight boards, a maintenance of effort requirement for police funding, and modifications of several of Governor Evers’ special session bills.

-more-

Serving Racine and Kenosha Counties - Senate District 21

“I don’t, and no one else should, view this as “competition” with the special session bills. The timing of the release of this package and the events of the last week in purely coincidental. I’ve been developing these bills for months and in some cases years, and got the last final bill draft back after 8 revisions yesterday,” said Wanggaard. “The PACT should not be considered a Republican package of bills. I put the PACT together with input from a lot of parties, including Republicans and Democrats, with the goal of improving police service and its interaction with the community.”

“I am hopeful this package will continue to have bipartisan support and be signed into law by the Governor. But that’s not guaranteed,” Wanggaard concluded. “I recognize that I, and supporters of the bills, need to do the legwork in the coming weeks and months to earn our votes. That’s how legislating and leadership works.”

Wanggaard unveiled the PACT bills today, hoping to pass the bills early during the 2021 legislative session. Several of the bills will also be sent to the Law Enforcement Standards Bureau for their review and input. A listing of the “PACT” bills are attached. The bill drafts can be found on the senator’s website, www.senatorwanggaard.com

###

PUBLIC SAFETY “PACT” LEGISLATION

Accountability

- LRB 2694 (*Co-Sponsored by Senator Alberta Darling*) – Creation of an Independent Use of Force Review Advisory Board
 - This bill creates an Independent Use of Force Review Board, to investigate and learn from certain police use of force incidents. The board would be tasked with reviewing the causes of individual use of force incidents and in an annual report, make any recommendations as to how to prevent similar incidents in the future. The Board is modeled after the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

- LRB 6341 (*Co-Sponsored by Senator Alberta Darling*) - Mandatory Reporting of Use of Force and Whistleblower Protections
 - This bill requires every law enforcement agency to have a policy as to when and how a use of force incident is to be reported, and requires officers who engage in or observe use of force incidents to report it. The bill also provides whistleblower protections for officers who report use of force incidents.
 - This bill is modified from a recommendation by Governor Evers and the Legislative Black Caucus

Community Involvement

- LRB 6339 (*Co-Sponsored by Senator Alberta Darling & Rep. Janel Brandtjen*) - Increasing Community Involvement in Police & Fire Commissions
 - Affecting Milwaukee and Madison only, this bill increases the independence and community involvement and partnership in Police & Fire Commissions. Public hearings, comments and confirmation would be required for all commissioners. Mayors must add representatives from law enforcement and fire-fighting to the Commission. The Commissions, rather than the Mayor, would appoint its own director.

- LRB 6349 (*Co-Sponsored by Senator Alberta Darling*) - Community Oriented Policing (COP) Grant Program
 - This bill creates a \$600,000 grant program to create Community Oriented Police Houses (COP Houses) in cities with a population in excess of 60,000 people. Modeled after a successful program in Racine, COP Houses provide a way to long-term stabilization of neighborhoods by building relationships with members of the community, improving the quality of life in the neighborhood, reducing crime, and empowering citizens to take back their neighborhoods

- COP Houses have often led to an improvement with property maintenance, reduced crime rates, better community relationships between neighbors, and the police. In some cases, crime has been reduced by up to 70 percent in areas where a COP House is located.

Transparency

- LRB 6346 (*Co-Sponsored by Senator Alberta Darling*) – Publication of Use of Force Policies
 - This bill requires law enforcement entities to have a link on their website to request a department’s Use-of-Force Policy. The policy must be provided to the requestor free of charge within 3 days.
 - This bill is modified from a recommendation by Governor Evers and the Legislative Black Caucus
- LRB 6350 (*Co-Sponsored by Senator Alberta Darling*) – Use-of-Force Annual Reporting
 - This bill requires the Wisconsin Department of Justice to publish an annual report on law enforcement use of force incidents.
 - This bill was recommended by Governor Evers and the Legislative Black Caucus
- LRB 2694 – Creation of an Independent Use of Force Review Board.
 - *See above*

Public Safety

- LRB 6338 (*Co-Sponsored by Senator Alberta Darling*) – Prohibits Training the Use of Choke Holds
 - This bill is modified from a recommendation by Governor Evers and the Legislative Black Caucus
- LRB 6348 (*Co-Sponsored by Senator Alberta Darling*) – Maintenance of Effort for Police Budgets
 - This bill requires a municipality to maintain its law enforcement budget, unless the municipality merges with another department, or outsources its law enforcement to another entity.
 - If the municipality decreases the amount of its budget for hiring, training and retaining law enforcement officers, their Shared Revenue payment is reduced by the same amount. For example, if a city decreases its police force budget by \$100,000, it would receive \$100,000 less in Shared Revenue.