



Alberta Darling

Wisconsin State Senator

Assembly Bill 45/Senate Bill 32
Senate Judiciary and Consumer Affairs Committee
May 25, 1999

Chairman George, Committee members; thank you for hearing testimony this morning on Assembly Bill 45.

Assembly Bill 45 and Senate Bill 32 requires the Department of Justice to expand the currently operating toll-free hotline for the reporting of drug law violations to include the reporting of dangerous weapons in and/or around school grounds. DOJ would be required to report this information to schools and local law enforcement agencies.

As our nation continues to deal with the horrible school tragedy in Colorado, and others such as the shooting last week in Georgia, we have before us in Wisconsin an opportunity to give the students themselves, a means by which to prevent such incidences in Wisconsin. The Dangerous Weapons Hotline.

Shocking information following the shootings in Colorado and Georgia indicate that fellow students knew of problems with all three of the suspects involved. The suspect in Georgia is reported to allegedly have stated that he had no reason to live and that he was going to bring guns to schools.

Where do kids turn with this information?

Their teachers, principal, parents? Most likely, no. Kids tell us that they don't feel comfortable going to these adults with this information.

The police, 911? Contacting the police or calling 911 for a young person is a huge step, one that may very likely pit the person against their peers.

So while we all can agree that it would best for a student with information regarding a dangerous weapon in a school to contact a teacher or local law enforcement, the reality is that they most likely will not. Assembly Bill 45 proposes an alternative outlet for students to provide this information while providing them with the security and anonymity they desire.

The increasing number of incidents in schools involving dangerous weapons in our communities, and across the nation, dictate that we take this situation very seriously. The Dangerous Weapons Hot-Line will not be a complete solution to these problems, rather a valuable tool in the fight against crimes in our schools.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have on this important public safety proposal.

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