



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Corrections and the Courts
FROM: John Huebscher, Executive Director
DATE: September 10, 2003
RE: Assembly Bill 352—Huber privileges

On behalf of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 352.

Because our Catholic social teachings on crime and punishment consistently emphasize the goal of rehabilitation, we are particularly supportive of the provisions that would give judges across the state the discretion to allow prisoners to leave a jail or house of correction to receive counseling, therapy and parenting education.

These provisions are clearly aimed at helping prisoners gain the insights and skills necessary to living peaceful and productive lives once they return to their families and their communities. For cases of domestic and sexual abuse, continued therapy and counseling is critical in order to begin to repair the damage done to victims and family members, and to help ensure that these terrible crimes don't happen again.

Proposals like AB 352—which serve the common good, further the work of restorative justice, and seek to strengthen families—should receive everyone's support.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections and the Courts
From: Criminal Law Section, State Bar of Wisconsin
Date: September 10, 2003
Re: Assembly Bill 352 - SUPPORT

The Criminal Law Section of the State Bar of Wisconsin supports Assembly Bill 352 because it will provide consistency from county to county with regard to Huber privileges.

Wisconsin established the first successful day parole program for county jail prisoners in 1913. Called the Huber Law, it allows prisoners to leave jail and go out and work during the day, but return to jail at night. This law enables persons confined to jail to maintain employment and continue to support their families and meet other obligations. It plays a key role in rehabilitating prisoners and preparing them for returning to the community as productive, contributing, law-abiding citizens.

In addition to work privileges, therapy helps rehabilitate prisoners. Granting Huber privileges for therapy is a common sense way to ensure that prisoners will have the tools they need to cope once released from jail. However, counties have different interpretations as to whether current law allows for granting Huber privileges for such therapy, since it is not clearly specified in the statutes. Such a strict reading of the law has resulted in some prisoners being denied Huber release for therapy. Without such therapy, some will be tempted to stray down a criminal path upon release from jail and reoffend, an expensive proposition for taxpayers and a toll on strained county budgets.

Assembly Bill 352 would bring consistency to varying county policies and send a clear message that granting Huber privileges for prisoners to receive needed therapy is not only expressly allowed, but desirable.

For these reasons, the Criminal Law Section urges committee members to support Assembly Bill 352.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Deb Sybell, Government Relations Coordinator for the State Bar of Wisconsin.



JEAN HUNDERTMARK

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

40TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

Testimony for AB 352
Assembly Correction and the Courts Committee
September 10, 2003

Thank you Chairman Bies and committee members for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 352. AB 352 was an idea that was brought to my attention by Kim Roberts, a probation and parole agent in Waupaca County.

State statute currently allows a Huber inmate to be granted the privilege of being released from a county jail for periods of time for any of the following purposes: to seek employment or to work, to perform community service, to attend a court ordered assessment, to attend an alcohol related treatment program, to attend a court proceeding, to receive an education, or to receive medical treatment. It even goes so far as to allow time to conduct any self-employed occupation, including housekeeping and attending to the needs of the person's family.

However, the law is silent when a need is recognized that would allow certain types of treatment of the very condition that contributed to the crime for which the inmate was convicted.

AB 352 would allow a Huber inmate to be released to receive counseling or therapy from an approved public treatment facility, to attend an assessment to gauge the need for treatment, to attend a parenting education program, or to meet with their probation or parole officer.

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Because the law is silent in allowing Huber inmates to receive treatment for sexual or domestic abuse while they are incarcerated, many do not receive any treatment at all. This lack of treatment often leads those to re-offend once they are released.

The goal of this bill is to give inmates the therapy they need to deal with their problems and succeed in becoming contributing members of their community.

Some counties allow Huber privileges for this type of therapy already. However, other counties follow the letter of the law and do not. This bill would clarify any current ambiguity and allow all counties to give these individuals the help they need. Any costs associated with this treatment would be paid by the inmate.

If this therapy option is offered through the Huber program, inmates are more likely to be motivated to attend. Participation levels would be much higher if therapy was done while the person is in the Huber program than after they are released, and treatment could start almost immediately.

Another important aspect of this bill is allowing for the release of a Huber inmate for parental education. Ironically, Huber law allows the inmate to be released to care for their children after a domestic abuse incident, but it does not allow for therapy on how to deal with that child upon release so that repeat offenses do not occur.

In closing, the Huber program has done a good job in reintegrating offenders back into our society. AB 352 would simply add to the program by giving inmates the therapy and counseling they need to become valuable members of their family and their

Hundertmark testimony
AB352
Page 3

community. We are all aware of the high rate of return to prison or jail by repeat offenders. It is my hope that this bill will help to reduce that number.

Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

Assembly Committee on Corrections and the Courts

DATE _____

Moved by Albers Seconded by Stus

AB 352 SB _____ Clearinghouse Rule _____

AJR _____ SJR _____

A _____ SR _____ Other _____

A/S Amdt _____

A/S Amdt _____ to A/S Amdt _____

A/S Sub Amdt _____

A/S Amdt _____ to A/S Sub Amdt _____

A/S Amdt _____ to A/S Amdt _____ to A/S Sub Amdt _____

Be recommended for:

Passage

Introduction

Adoption

Rejection

Indefinite Postponement

Tabling

Concurrence

Nonconcurrence

	Committee Member	Aye	No	Absent	Not voting
1.	Rep. Garey Bies, chair	1			
2.	Rep. Sheryl Albers, vice-chair	2			
3.	Rep. Greg Underheim				
4.	Rep. Carol Owens	3			
5.	Rep. Frank Lasee				
6.	Rep. Scott Suder	4			
7.	Rep. Mark Honadel				
8.	Rep. Mark Pocan	5			
9.	Rep. Pedro Colon	7			
10.	Rep. Tony Staskunas	6			
11.	Rep. Sheldon Wasserman				
Totals					

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION FAILED

HB 352

Allow Father and to receive
treatment for sexual or domestic
abuse.

-> Can be released to care
for ^{children} dependent, but no therapy
on how to deal with child

HB 352

CL: to City ST house of Cor

for work
school

Com Serv

Med treat-

Counseling

Therapy

Assessment for Therapy
parenting counseling