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👉 (FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2005-06

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on Judiciary, Corrections and Privacy...

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

* Contents organized for archiving by: Stefanie Rose (LRB) (July 2012)

Senate

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Judiciary, Corrections and Privacy

Senate Bill 274

Relating to: the authority of the Department of Justice.

By Senators Coggs, Taylor, Carpenter, Hansen, Lassa, Risser and Erpenbach; cosponsored by Representatives Young, Grigsby, Fields, Colon, Toles, Turner, A. Williams, Black and Kessler, by request of Attorney General Peggy A. Lautenschlager.

August 01, 2005 Referred to Committee on Judiciary, Corrections and Privacy.

May 4, 2006 Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1.

Kimber Liedl
Committee Clerk

FEB 10 2005



Spencer Coggs

State Senator

Feb. 8, 2006

Sen. David Zien
Chairperson
Committee on Judiciary, Corrections and Privacy
State Capitol – Room 15 South
Madison, WI

Hand delivered

Dear Chairperson Zien:

I am writing to request that you schedule a public hearing for Senate Bill 274 (SB 274), relating to providing authority to the Department of Justice to prosecute cases under civil rights law. I am the author of SB 274.

Currently, citizens of our state have no course of redress when a county district attorney declines to investigate potential civil rights violations. Attorneys General in 26 states already have this power. Wisconsin, which has a proud progressive tradition, should also have the ability to prosecute civil rights cases.

SB 274 was introduced to the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Corrections and Privacy nearly a half a year ago. With the clock ticking on our legislative session, I respectfully request that this worthy legislation be given due consideration for a hearing as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

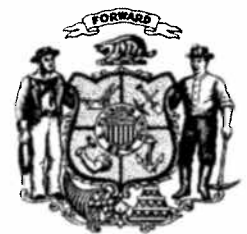
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Spencer Coggs', is written over a horizontal line.

SEN. SPENCER COGGS
6th Senate District

SC/ddf



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEB 21 2006

PEGGY A. LAUTENSCHLAGER
ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Deputy Attorney General

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February 16, 2006

State Senator Dave Zien, Chair
Senate Judiciary, Corrections, and Privacy Committee
Room 15 South, State Capitol

State Representative Mark Gundrum, Chair
Assembly Judiciary Committee
Room 119 West, State Capitol

Dear Chairman Zien & Chairman Gundrum:

Last summer, State Senator Spencer Coggs and State Representative Leon Young introduced companion bills, Senate Bill 274 and Assembly Bill 514, granting the Attorney General the authority to prosecute civil rights violations.

Upon introduction, SB 274 and AB 514 were referred to your committees. Unfortunately, after sitting for more than six months in the Senate committee and nearly eight months in the Assembly committee, neither bill has been scheduled for a public hearing.

The 2005 Legislative Session is drawing to a close. The time to act on these proposals is now.

While the U.S. Attorney General has civil rights enforcement authority, Wisconsin's Attorney General cannot under current law act on behalf of the state's citizens when they are the victims of civil rights violations. Your action is needed.

Despite cases of discrimination brought to the attention of the Department of Justice, including a case last year in which DOJ agents were denied lodging allegedly because of their race, the law does not allow the Attorney General to bring suit to remedy violations.

The need for the bill:

- The ongoing struggle for civil rights for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, religion or sexual orientation, would be enhanced by an Attorney General empowered to defend these rights.

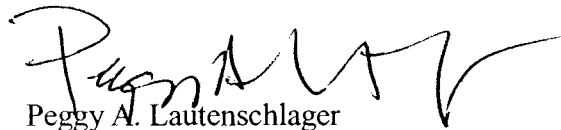
- Despite gains in the recognition of civil rights for all, acts of discrimination are still too common—hurting individuals as well as vulnerable communities of Wisconsin citizens.
- The federal government has this authority, but has reduced enforcement actions. Prosecutions of racial and gender discrimination typically handled by the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division have declined 40 percent over the past five years.
- It is in the public interest to allow a public response to civil rights violations.

Wisconsin Department of Justice Commitment:

- To ensure that every citizen is able to exercise full civil rights in our state, this authority brings the power of the state to the defense of the victims of discrimination.
- To more fully protect the rights of those who face discrimination – whether in employment, consumer transactions (such as automobile financing disparities), or as the victims of violent crime, harassment, and exclusion.
- To fulfill Wisconsin's promise as a state in which every citizen is free to enjoy his or her rights in equal measure with all other citizens; to bolster the goal of equality with the assurance of swift justice.

I strongly urge that you schedule a public hearing on this important legislation very soon, while there is still time for the bills to receive the attention they deserve.

Very truly yours,



Peggy A. Lautenschlager
Attorney General