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*Testimony before the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
Senator André Jacque
March 2, 2022*

Dear Chair Wanggaard and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety,

Thank you for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 851, a proposal that establishes consequences for violent and repeat offenders.

Law enforcement officers throughout the state have expressed concern about lax judicial policies that allow known violent criminals to return quickly to their communities without appropriate consequences. In Milwaukee, for instance, Police Department data shows there were 102 offenders arrested in 2016 who, collectively, had been arrested 945 times for a total of 2,658 crimes over the previous decade. These habitual offenders repeatedly take advantage of judicial indifference to continue their criminal careers.

Senate Bill 851 expands the list of offenses excluded from statutory programs granting early parole, extended supervision, or discharge from probation. These programs were implemented to offer many lower-risk convicts an opportunity to earn back their freedom by demonstrating that they are no longer a danger to the public. However, many violent offenses remained eligible for these early release programs, including child trafficking and abuse, bank robbery, arson, and armed burglary. Senate Bill 851 excludes these crimes by expanding the list of offenses ineligible for early release to include all violent felonies and violent misdemeanors.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 851.



CHUCK WICHGERS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 83rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

March 2, 2022

Senate Bill 851/Assembly Bill 842

State Representative Chuck Wichgers, 83rd Assembly District

Chairman Wanggaard and Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing my testimony today on Senate Bill 851 and Assembly Bill 842.

On November 21, 2021, Waukesha, Wisconsin was getting ready to start the holiday season with its annual Christmas parade. The joy of season turned to terror and trauma when a repeat criminal intentionally drove his SUV into the parade killing six people and injuring over 60.

As Waukesha responded, so the nation and the world. President Biden and Pope Francis extended condolences to those affected by the attack. The healing from this attack has only begun and making sure that something like this never happens again is part of that process.

This legislation is being introduced to address the lax treatment of violent criminals in our laws.

The perpetrator of the Waukesha massacre should never have been out of jail.

This bill specifies that an individual who is on probation for committing certain violent crimes may not be discharged early from probation, and an individual who is serving a sentence in prison for committing certain violent crimes does not qualify for programs that allow early release to parole or extended supervision.

In plain language, our proposal expands the list of offenses excluded from statutory programs granting early parole, extended supervision, or discharge from probation. These programs were implemented to offer many lower-risk convicts an opportunity to earn back their freedom by demonstrating that they are no longer a danger to the public.

However, many violent offenses remained eligible for these early release programs, including child trafficking and abuse, bank robbery, arson, and armed burglary. This bill adds these crimes to the list of offenses ineligible for early release to include all violent felonies and violent misdemeanors.

Governor Evers even admitted the aforementioned individual should not have been out of jail. This bill is one tool that Wisconsin can put in its public safety toolbox to ensure that the tragedy in Waukesha will never be repeated in our state. I urge your support of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.