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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...  
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2011-12

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Labor, Public Safety, and Urban  
Affairs (SC-LPSUA)

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**



- None.

March 9, 2012

**EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD**

Present: (5) Senators Wanggaard, Grothman, Lazich, Wirch and King.  
Absent: (0) None.  
Excused: (0) None.

Moved by Senator Wanggaard, seconded by Senator Lazich that **Senate Amendment 1** be recommended for adoption.

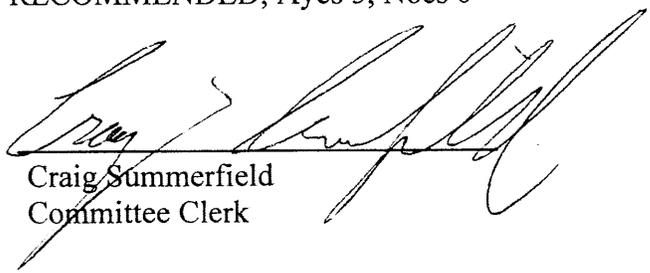
Ayes: (5) Senators Wanggaard, Grothman, Lazich, Wirch and King.  
Noes: (0) None.

**ADOPTION OF SENATE AMENDMENT 1 RECOMMENDED,**  
Ayes 5, Noes 0

Moved by Senator King, seconded by Senator Wirch that **Senate Bill 544** be recommended for passage as amended.

Ayes: (5) Senators Wanggaard, Grothman, Lazich, Wirch and King.  
Noes: (0) None.

**PASSAGE AS AMENDED RECOMMENDED, Ayes 5, Noes 0**



Craig Summerfield  
Committee Clerk

## Vote Record

### Committee on Labor, Public Safety, and Urban Affairs

Date: 3/9/12

Moved by: KING

Seconded by: WIRCH

AB \_\_\_\_\_ SB 544 Clearinghouse Rule \_\_\_\_\_  
 AJR \_\_\_\_\_ SJR \_\_\_\_\_ Appointment \_\_\_\_\_  
 AR \_\_\_\_\_ 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     Adoption     Confirmation     Concurrence     Indefinite Postponement  
 Introduction     Rejection     Tabling     Nonconcurrence

Committee Member

	<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
<b>Senator Van Wanggaard, Chair</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Glenn Grothman</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Mary Lazich</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Robert Wirch</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Jessica King</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Totals:</b>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	_____	_____

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

## Vote Record Committee on Labor, Public Safety, and Urban Affairs

Date: 3/9/12

Moved by: WANGGAARD      Seconded by: LAZICH

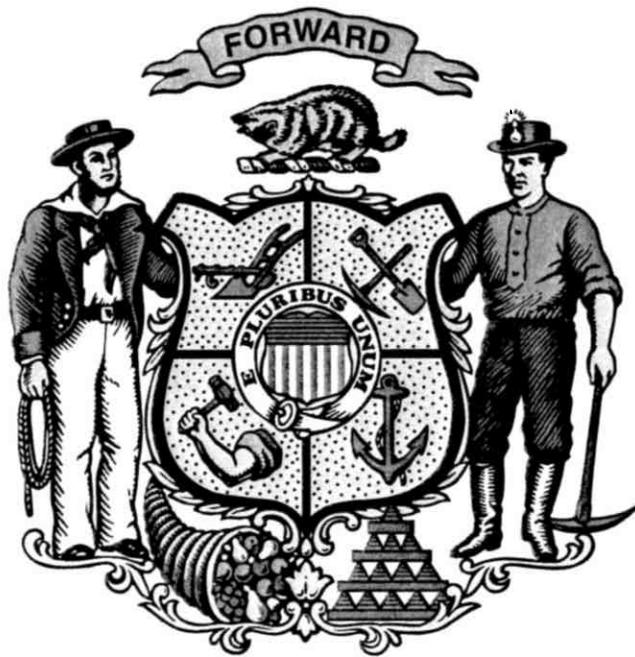
AB \_\_\_\_\_      SB 544      Clearinghouse Rule \_\_\_\_\_  
 AJR \_\_\_\_\_      SJR \_\_\_\_\_      Appointment \_\_\_\_\_  
 AR \_\_\_\_\_      SR \_\_\_\_\_      Other \_\_\_\_\_

A/S Amdt 1  
 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       Adoption       Confirmation       Concurrence       Indefinite Postponement  
 Introduction       Rejection       Tabling       Nonconcurrence

<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Aye</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Not Voting</u>
<b>Senator Van Wanggaard, Chair</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Glenn Grothman</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Mary Lazich</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Robert Wirch</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Senator Jessica King</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Totals: 5-0      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_





# KEITH RIPP

## 47<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

March 8, 2011

Representative Keith Ripp  
Testimony Senate Bill 544  
Senate Committee on Labor, Public Safety and Urban Affairs

I want to thank committee members for allowing me to present testimony today in favor of Senate Bill 544.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the United States. Victims are often stalked after the initial violence occurs and long after the legal system has taken its course. This leads some victims to believe the only way to hide from perpetrators is to take on a new identity.

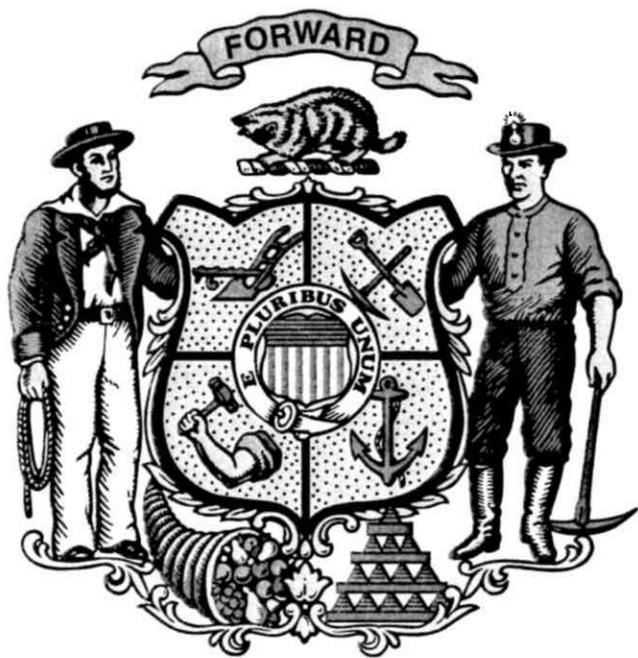
In Wisconsin, the name change statute does not allow victims to keep their new names confidential. Current Wisconsin statutes require that a petition for a name change be published in the local newspaper three times. Requiring this type of publication leaves victims with little hope of finding safety in anonymity.

Four states have created specific provisions exempting victims from publishing notice of the name change and allow courts to seal the record, California, Montana, New Jersey, and North Carolina.

SB 544 directs the court to waive the publication requirement if the petitioner shows probable cause that his or her safety is at risk and the court is convinced that the petitioner is not seeking the name change for the purpose of avoiding debt or concealing a criminal record. It also puts in place procedures for notification of local governments and indicates that the new name is to be kept confidential.

Victims of domestic abuse are some of society's most vulnerable members and should be allowed the privacy of changing their names. Requiring the publishing of their name change sends a beacon to abusers and leaves victims with little hope of ever escaping their abuser. SB 544 will allow victims to confidentially change their name and provide at least a glimmer of optimism that their life may soon return to some normalcy.

Again, I would like to reiterate my support for this legislation. I would also like to thank the committee for allowing me to submit testimony in favor of this legislation.



**To:** Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Public Safety, and Urban Affairs  
**From:** Morgan Young, Attorney, Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV)  
**Date:** March 8, 2012  
**Re:** Support for Senate Bill 544—Confidential Name Changes

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Chairman Wanggaard, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 544, which provides a way for individuals whose safety is in jeopardy, such as domestic violence and stalking victims, to confidentially change their names in Wisconsin. My name is Morgan Young, and I represent the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV). WCADV is the statewide membership organization that represents local domestic violence victim service providers and survivors.

At WCADV, we field legal questions from advocates and domestic violence victims around the state. Many times victims or advocates call us because they cannot understand a provision in the law or legal interpretation that defies commonsense and seemingly puts victims at risk unnecessarily. Senate Bill 544 addresses an issue about which we have received numerous calls and questions. Victims, advocates and legal professionals express intense frustration that there is no way for victims to confidentially change their names to avoid a stalker or gain a sense of safety.

Under current law, all legal name changes require that notice of the name change be published in the newspaper three times. This requirement means that just as victims are hoping to find safety in anonymity, they are forced to broadcast their name and location far and wide. Most domestic violence victims do not need to go to these lengths to protect themselves; however, for a relatively small number of victims, the stalking or abuse is so severe that they believe they will only be able to escape constant terror and fear if they are able to hide from the perpetrator by obtaining a new identity.

Let me tell you of one such woman, who I will call Erin. Erin contacted WCADV last year about changing her name. This is her story:

*I met my abuser-stalker while in middle school. As far back as I can remember, somehow, some way, he was always in my life. We dated off and on throughout our school years. After school, we went our separate ways, only to find one another again.*

*We became involved again, slowly, simple things, such as walking to work with me, or picking me up. Going for walks or drives and talking. He'd spend the night on the couch. Then, we just were. I can't really say when we became a couple.*

*In mid-1990's, he started stealing cars and motorcycles. I heard talk, but never saw this. Soon, he was in prison for grand theft auto. Several months later he was released from prison and back in my life. Shortly after, he first hit me.*

*"Andy" had spent a few days with some friends and then showed up at my house. He was acting different. I thought his blood sugar was low (he was type 2 diabetic), and asked him about it. He told me he was high on meth—that he'd been out somewhere cooking meth. I told him I didn't use drugs and wanted nothing to do with anyone who used them. We fought. He slapped me followed by a backhand. My head bounced off the wall and left a small hole in my hallway wall.*

*That was the beginning of the end.*

*As "Andy" continued to use, he became a person who I no longer knew. I overheard him and his friends bragging about crimes they had committed or were planning. Believe me when I say no crime was too horrific for them: breaking into churches, robbing elderly couples, beating up women and taking their state welfare checks or their social security checks.*

*It seemed that "Andy" was always high. At one point, he bragged to me in front of my best friend that he'd been up for 13 days and was going to continue until he passed out. By this time, I was trying to leave. I had no respect for him.*

*Leaving was much harder than I thought or anticipated. First, my family refused to help me. They said that "I had made my bed and needed to lay in it." What money I made from work, Andy took. So, I stayed.*

*The beatings became more and more frequent, daily, sometimes, several times a day. Nothing I ever did was good enough for him. If I went to work, I was screwing around on him with other men. If a man looked at me, Andy was right there, putting his arm around my waist, digging his nails into me, reminding me there would be punishment doled out for this.*

*One day, I went to my friend's house, broke down and told him what was going on. "Andy" showed up. There was a fight, and I was dragged out, back into hell. Later that morning, my friend showed up demanding to talk with "Andy," who was sleeping. My friend proceeded to wake him. They had words. A few hits were thrown in, and I left. My friend saved me that day.*

*After a few weeks of living with my friend, I went to my mom. I was waiting for my new apartment to become available. Once it was, I moved in. And that very night, "Andy" showed up. I asked him to leave, but he came into my apartment and stayed. From that point on, I was allowed to do nothing alone. He walked me to and from work when the weather was good; when it was bad, he drove me.*

Erin told me about a cycle of violent abuse, arrests and releases that went on for several years.

*A police officer contacted me, wanting to discuss a Stalking Order. I met with him. He explained to me that I would be the first person in that county to apply for a Stalking Order against an ex boyfriend-girlfriend. He also told me I would have to fight for it, but that I could subpoena police officers and anyone else who was involved over the course of my relationship with "Andy." I left that day with a temporary Stalking Order.*

*I subpoenaed every single police officer in that city. Sheriff's, court appointed attorneys, a judge. No one was left behind. After a long, grueling day in court, I was awarded a lifelong Stalking Order. It was a victory for me. When I walked out of the court room, many police officers came and gave me hugs, congratulating me. Then, I was told, "This is a good victory for us. You just opened many doors for future victims of domestic violence. However, remember that this is just a piece of paper, and it won't protect you from a bullet." Those words still haunt me to this day.*

Because Erin is still deathly afraid of "Andy" and because he still pushes the limits to find her and harass her, she has moved to several different states to escape. She contacted WCADV to find out about changing her name. She goes on:

*I looked into a name change, an identity change. However, in order to do that, I must run an ad in a newspaper. The law says I must do this so that I am "not scamming any unpaid bills or collectors". So, "Andy" can stalk me, use my name and social security number and do illegal things, and there's really nothing that I can do to protect myself. Doing a sealed name change would protect me and others in extreme cases like me. What is the point of my changing my name for my own personal safety, if I have to run an ad in a newspaper? In this age of technology, a sealed name change is the only way that I can change my name to protect myself. And sadly, I am unable to even do this.*

*Domestic Violence is horrible. Being stalked, hunted like an animal; it's like being raped over and over and over. You can yell. You can scream. You go to the police. You follow the laws, and do as you are told. You go into shelters to be hidden, to start over, but if your stalker-abuser knows your information, there's no place for you to hide, to start over. You are at risk no matter where you go.*

*I'm not asking for a law to be passed or changed to accommodate me. I am asking for the laws to be changed to accommodate the future victims of stalkers and domestic violence. If I can help save one life from going through my hell, this will have been worth it. When you walk away from everything, everyone, to save your life and there's, then the laws should help you, not hinder you.*

For people like Erin, SB 544 can be the thing that finally changes their lives for the better. On behalf of Erin and other victims like her, I ask that you support this bill. Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.