AN ACT to amend 177.12 (1), 177.13, 177.16, 177.17 (5) (intro.), (a) and (b), 177.22 (1) and 177.23 (1); and to create 177.01 (14m), 177.135, 177.17 (2) (cm), 177.225, 177.23 (2) (am) and 177.255 of the statutes; relating to: escheat of abandoned U.S. savings bonds.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau
This bill provides that a U.S. savings bond that remains unredeemed for five years after final maturity is presumed abandoned and subject to the custody of this state under this state’s version of the Uniform Unclaimed Property Act. The bill also provides that, if all of the following conditions apply, the Secretary of Revenue may commence an action for a determination that the bond is abandoned and for an order transferring ownership of the abandoned bond to this state:

1. The bond has been presumed abandoned for at least one year.
2. The bond is subject to the custody of this state as unclaimed property.
3. At least one year has elapsed since the secretary published notice of the name of the person appearing to be the owner of the bond.

The secretary must redeem the bond within three years after entry of the order transferring ownership of the bond. The proceeds from the redemption are deposited in the school fund.

At any time before the order is entered, the rightful owner may file a claim with the secretary for the bond’s return. After the order is entered, the previous owner may file a claim with the secretary for return of the bond or payment of the amount
The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 177.01 (14m) of the statutes is created to read:

177.01 (14m) “U.S. savings bond” means a savings bond issued by the U.S. department of the treasury, whether in paper, electronic, or paperless form, and includes all proceeds of the savings bond.

SECTION 2. 177.12 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

177.12 (1) Intangible Except as provided in s. 177.135, intangible property and any income or increment derived from it held in a fiduciary capacity for the benefit of another person is presumed abandoned unless the owner, within 5 years after it has become payable or distributable, has increased or decreased the principal, accepted payment of principal or income, communicated concerning the property or otherwise indicated an interest as evidenced by a memorandum or other record on file prepared by the fiduciary.

SECTION 3. 177.13 of the statutes is amended to read:

177.13 Property held by courts and public agencies. Except as provided in ss. 40.08 (8), 177.135, 800.095 (8), 852.01 (3), 863.37 (2), and 863.39, intangible property held for the owner by a court, state, or other government, governmental subdivision, or agency, public corporation, or public authority that remains unclaimed by the owner for more than one year after it became payable or distributable is presumed abandoned.

SECTION 4. 177.135 of the statutes is created to read:
177.135 **U.S. savings bonds.** Notwithstanding s. 177.02 (1), a U.S. savings bond that remains unredeemed by the owner for more than 5 years after the date of final maturity is presumed abandoned. In this section, “final maturity” means the date a U.S. savings bond stops earning interest upon reaching its final extended maturity date.

**SECTION 5.** 177.16 of the statutes is amended to read:

177.16 **Contents of safe deposit box or other safekeeping repository.**

All Except as provided in s. 177.135, all tangible and intangible property held in a safe deposit box or any other safekeeping repository in this state in the ordinary course of the holder’s business and proceeds resulting from the sale of the property permitted by other law, which remain unclaimed by the owner for more than 5 years after the lease or rental period on the box or other repository has expired, are presumed abandoned.

**SECTION 6.** 177.17 (2) (cm) of the statutes is created to read:

177.17 (2) (cm) In the case of a U.S. savings bond, the name and last-known address of each owner of the U.S. savings bond and the issue date, face amount, and serial number of the U.S. savings bond.

**SECTION 7.** 177.17 (5) (intro.), (a) and (b) of the statutes are amended to read:

177.17 (5) (intro.) Not more than 120 days before filing the report required by this section, the holder in possession of property presumed abandoned and subject to custody as unclaimed property under this chapter shall send written notice to the apparent owner and, in the case of a U.S. savings bond, to each owner of the U.S. savings bond at his or her last-known address informing him or her that the holder is in possession of property subject to this chapter if all of the following exist factors apply:
(a) The holder has in its records an address for the apparent owner or owner of the U.S. savings bond, that the holder’s records do not disclose to be inaccurate.

(b) The claim of the apparent owner, or owner of the U.S. savings bond, is not barred by the statute of limitations.

SECTION 8. 177.22 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

177.22 (1) Except as provided in subs. (2) and (4) and s. 177.225, the administrator, within 3 years after the receipt of abandoned property, shall sell it to the highest bidder in a manner that, in the judgment of the administrator, affords the most favorable market for the property. The administrator may decline the highest bid and reoffer the property for sale if, in his or her judgment, the bid is insufficient. If the administrator determines that the probable cost of sale exceeds the value of the property, it need not be offered for sale. Any public sale under this section held in a city, village, or town in this state shall be preceded by the publication of one notice, at least 3 weeks in advance of sale, in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the property is to be sold.

SECTION 9. 177.225 of the statutes is created to read:

177.225 Escheat of U.S. savings bonds. (1) If all of the following conditions apply, the administrator may bring an action for a judgment that a U.S. savings bond, including a U.S. savings bond in the possession of the administrator or a U.S. savings bond that has been lost, stolen, or destroyed, is abandoned and for an order transferring ownership of the abandoned U.S. savings bond to this state:

(a) The U.S. savings bond has been presumed abandoned under s. 177.135 for at least one year.
(b) The U.S. savings bond is subject to the custody of this state as unclaimed property under s. 177.03.

(c) At least one year has elapsed since the administrator published the notice required under s. 177.18.

(2) An action under sub. (1) may be commenced in the circuit court for Dane County or in any county that would be a proper place of trial under s. 801.50. Subject to sub. (3), service may be made under s. 801.11 (1) (c) by publication of a notice published as a class 3 notice under ch. 985. In determining which newspaper is likely to give notice as required under s. 985.02 (1), the administrator shall consider the conditions under s. 177.03 that made the U.S. savings bond subject to the custody of this state as unclaimed property. The administrator may postpone commencing an action under this subsection until sufficient U.S. savings bonds meet the conditions under sub. (1) to justify the expense of the action.

(3) If service is made under sub. (2) by publication of a notice, the administrator shall, before publication of the notice, file with the court an affidavit setting forth the administrator’s efforts to locate the owners of each U.S. savings bond subject to the action, and, upon filing of the affidavit, there shall be a presumption that the owners cannot with reasonable diligence be served under s. 801.11 (1) (a) or (b). The affidavit shall include all of the following information with respect to the U.S. savings bond:

(a) A description of the efforts made by the administrator to ascertain the name and last-known address of each person appearing to be an owner of the U.S. savings bond.

(b) The name and last-known address of each person identified by the administrator as appearing to be an owner of the U.S. savings bond.
(c) The interest of each unknown person identified by the administrator as
appearing to be an owner of the U.S. savings bond.

(d) A description of the efforts made by the administrator to notify each owner
of the U.S. savings bond that the owner may be entitled to claim abandoned property.

(e) A statement that, based on prior efforts of the administrator to locate or
contact the persons appearing to be owners of the U.S. saving bond, the
administrator believes that the administrator cannot, with reasonable diligence,
serve the owners with notice of the action by personal or substituted service.

(4) In an action under sub. (1), if the court finds that the administrator has
substantially complied with the provisions of this chapter and that no other person
has proven ownership of the U.S. savings bond, the court shall enter judgment that
this state has all legal title and interest, including all rights, powers, and privileges
of survivorship of any owner, co-owner, or beneficiary, of the U.S. savings bond and
that this state owns the U.S. savings bond free of all claims of the owner or previous
holder and of all persons claiming through or under them.

(5) Within 3 years after the entry of a judgment under sub. (4), the
administrator shall file an application with the U.S. department of the treasury to
redeem the U.S. savings bond.

SECTION 10. 177.23 (1) of the statutes is amended to read:

177.23 (1) Except as provided in sub. (2), the administrator shall deposit in the
school fund all funds received under this chapter, including the clear proceeds from
the sale of abandoned property under s. 177.22 and amounts received from the
redemption of U.S. savings bonds under s. 177.225 (5). Before making the deposit,
the administrator shall record the name and last-known address of each person
appearing from the holders’ reports to be entitled to the property and; the name and
last-known address of each insured person or annuitant and beneficiary and, with respect to each policy or contract listed in the report of an insurance company, its number, the name of the company, and the amount due; and, with respect to each U.S. savings bond, the name and last-known address of each owner of the U.S. savings bond and the issue date, face amount, and serial number of the U.S. savings bond.

The information recorded by the administrator under this subsection is not available for inspection or copying under s. 19.35 (1) until 12 months after payment or delivery of the property is due under s. 177.17 (4) (a).

**SECTION 11.** 177.23 (2) (am) of the statutes is created to read:

> 177.23 (2) (am) Any costs in connection with an action under s. 177.225 (1) and the redemption of a U.S. savings bond under s. 177.225 (5).

**SECTION 12.** 177.255 of the statutes is created to read:

**177.255 Claim to recover abandoned U.S. savings bond.** (1) Notwithstanding s. 177.225, any person who claimed an interest in a U.S. savings bond immediately before this state became the owner of the U.S. savings bond pursuant to a judgment entered under s. 177.225 (4) may file a claim under s. 177.24, and another state may file a claim under s. 177.25. Notwithstanding s. 177.24 (3) or 177.25 (2), if the claim is allowed, the administrator shall deliver the U.S. savings bond to the claimant or pay the claimant the amount the administrator received from redeeming the U.S. savings bond under s. 177.225 (5), minus any amounts that were deposited in the general fund to pay administrative expenses under s. 177.23 (2) that are attributable to the U.S. savings bond.

(2) A claimant who takes delivery under sub. (1) of a U.S. savings bond that is owned by this state takes the U.S. savings bond free of all claims of this state. The
administrator shall execute all documents necessary to complete the transfer of
ownership.

**SECTION 13. Nonstatutory provisions.**

(1) An unredeemed U.S. savings bond in the possession of the administrator
on the effective date of this subsection is presumed abandoned under section 177.135
of the statutes, as created by this act, as follows:

(a) If the U.S. savings bond reached final maturity, as defined in section
177.135 of the statutes, as created by this act, more than 5 years before the effective
date of this paragraph, the U.S. savings bond is presumed abandoned on the date
that is 5 years and one day after the date of final maturity.

(b) If the U.S. savings bond reached final maturity, as defined in section
177.135 of the statutes, as created by this act, not more than 5 years before the
effective date of this paragraph, the U.S. savings bond will be presumed abandoned
on the date that is 5 years and one day after the date of final maturity even if the U.S.
savings bond would have been presumed abandoned on an earlier date under chapter
177, 2013 stats.

(c) If the U.S. savings bond has not reached final maturity, as defined in section
177.135 of the statutes, as created by this act, on the effective date of this paragraph,
the U.S. savings bond will be presumed abandoned on the date that is 5 years and
one day after the date of final maturity even if the U.S. savings bond would have been
presumed abandoned on an earlier date under chapter 177, 2013 stats.

(2) For the purposes of determining when an action may be commenced under
section 177.225 (1) of the statutes, as created by this act, a notice published by the
administrator under section 177.18 of the statutes must include the name and
last-known address of each person appearing to be an owner of the U.S. savings bond.