



Testimony of Scott T. VanderSanden
President of AT&T Wisconsin
Senate Bill 626

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Scott VanderSanden, and I am the President of AT&T here in Wisconsin. My testimony is in support of Senate Bill 626.

Unfortunately, as we all know, residents of Wisconsin are not immune from domestic violence. Equally unfortunate, the systems in place today concerning the provisioning of wireless service do not allow for quick changes with wireless accounts in the case of domestic violence.

Our smartphones carry all of our important information, from our family, friend and work contacts, to our email and ability to find critical services such as medical care. Over the past decade, smartphone technology has become so ingrained in our daily lives that we would not think to leave home without our wallet, our car keys, or our phone.

In a situation where someone has been abused, if they are not the wireless account holder, the ability of that person to make changes to their wireless service, for example, to leave a "family service plan" or to be able to keep their phone and existing phone number, can be seriously comprised by the account holder – who is often times the abuser in these situations.

The bill before you today makes necessary changes to the law so that in the case of certain acts of harassment, domestic abuse, or other abuse, the wireless provider (upon court order) can transfer all rights to and responsibility for the use of telephone numbers from the abuser to the victim. This will allow a victim to keep their vital contact information and stay connected to their networks and most importantly, have the ability to find shelter, support and guidance.

All of the major cellular carriers, as well as victim's rights advocates, support this legislation, and I ask that you support the bill before you today.

Thank you.



To: Chairman Roth & Members of the Senate Committee on Workforce Development, Public Works and Military Affairs

Re: Senate Bill 626

Date: January 28, 2016

As the largest wireless service providers in Wisconsin, AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, US Cellular and Verizon are pleased to support SB 626. The purpose of SB 626 is to provide victims of domestic violence with the ability to retain their existing wireless telephone numbers and devices when attempting to gain independence from an abuser who is also the holder of the wireless account for those numbers and devices.

For victims of abuse, being able to keep their number and device is critical to their ability to stay in contact with and even gain help from their family, friends, employers, doctors and others in their support network.

Currently, victims can only leave and retain their existing wireless telephone numbers if the abuser who is the account holder consents. In many situations, either the victim does not want to alert the abuser of the plan to leave, or the abuser will refuse to give consent.

This bill allows a court to issue an order directing a wireless carrier to transfer the billing responsibility and control over a specific wireless telephone number or numbers (and the devices associated with those numbers) to a specific person. This order would supersede the need for the account holder's consent to do so.

SB 626 addresses this critical communications issue for victims of domestic violence. We respectfully urge the Members of the Committee to support SB 626.