



---

# SHAE SORTWELL

---

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2<sup>nd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Hearing Testimony**  
**Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
**February 9, 2022**  
**Assembly Bill 409**

Thank you Chairman Spiros and fellow members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety for taking the time to hear testimony on Assembly Bill 409 – relating to *battery or threat to a public officer and providing a penalty*.

Public officers serve in very visible positions which encompass several situations and decisions many would consider controversial. Because of this, many of them have experienced bodily harm or been threatened at some point(s) in their career. Additionally, threats generally precede actual harm. Many threats are obscene and give an indication that the perpetrator is intending to actually hurt the recipient of the threat.

An officer's family members are also sometimes threatened or harmed for the same reasons/intent. Harming or threatening to harm the family member is just as deplorable as done to the public officer. With that said, the penalty for those crimes should be mirrored.

Under current statute, it is a Class I felony to cause bodily harm to a public officer in order to influence the action of the public officer or as a result of any official action taken by the public officer. This bill extends the current Class I felony for harming a public officer to include threatening a public officer and harming or threatening their family.

This bill is supported by the Wisconsin Professional Police Association. The Senate version (SB 403) passed the full Senate in January.

I appreciate the committee's time and willingness to hear testimony on this bill. I hope to see this piece of legislation move forward. Thank you.



# DAN FEYEN

---

## STATE SENATOR

18th Senate District  
(608) 266-5300  
Sen.Feyen@legis.wi.gov

PO Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882  
<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/18/feyen>

To: The Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety  
From: Sen. Dan Feyen  
Re: Assembly Bill 409

Hello, Chairman Spiros and committee members. Thank you for taking the time today to hear testimony on Assembly Bill 409. This bill passed the Senate in January.

Public officers are individuals that are either elected or appointed to a governmental office. Public officers serve in very visible positions which can pose a higher risk to their safety than the general public. Many public officers have been hurt or threatened because of the governmental jobs they hold. Oftentimes, the officer's family is threatened or harmed as well.

Hurting or threatening anyone is a horrible offense. Public officials are at a greater risk of experiencing this type of violence due to the nature of their position. The current political climate and proliferation of social media makes this even more likely. Some of the things I have heard and seen directed at public officials and their families, are absolutely terrible. In fact, my family was violently threatened last year which is why I am passionate about extending the current penalty to include family members of public officials.

Threats to a public official are usually extremely violent and oftentimes precede actual harm. Because of this, the threat should be penalized just as readily as actual bodily harm. Additionally, because family members of public officials are at a higher risk of this type of violence due to their loved ones governmental position, they should also have increased protections under the law.

Current law specifies that it is a Class I felony to cause bodily harm to a public official in order to influence the action of the public officer or as a result of any official action taken by the public officer. This bill extends the current Class I felony classification to include threatening a public official and harming or threatening a family member of a public official.

Under this bill, family member is defined as a parent, spouse, sibling, child, stepchild, foster child, niece, nephew, or grandchild. These people deserve the same protections as their public facing family members.

This bill is supported by the Wisconsin Professional Police Association.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.



# Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

## Testimony on Assembly Bill 904

Thank you Chairman Spiros and committee members, for hearing Assembly Bill 904 today. This bill addresses issues that have flown under the radar, but have the potential to be very harmful to a community. I would like to thank Representative Rodriguez for reaching out to me to get this done.

You may be hard pressed to find a stronger supporter of our 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment right to keep and bear arms. I am proud to have either authored or co-authored every major gun rights law that has been introduced since 2011. I believe carrying a firearm comes with great responsibility, and carrying a firearm in an official capacity charged with protecting the public comes with even greater responsibility. This bill clarifies that a licensed private security person must complete DSPS firearms training to ensure they are proficient in handling, caring for, and using a firearm.

There also seems to be some confusion about what agency has jurisdiction in investigating and prosecuting violations of private security persons and agencies. This bill clears up any confusion by specifically allowing a city, village, town or county to enact and enforce ordinances relating to private security persons.

I believe this bill will ensure that no one is deprived of their life, liberty, or property, and also ensure that our citizens remain safe.

Again, thank you for your consideration of Assembly Bill 904, and I urge your support.

---

Serving Racine and Kenosha Counties - Senate District 21

State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882 • (608) 266-1832 • Toll-free (866) 615-7510  
E-Mail: Sen.Wanggaard@legis.wi.gov • SenatorWanggaard.com