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Testimony before the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

State Senator André Jacque

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Chair Wanggaard and Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of Senate Bill 388, relating to increased penalties for crimes against adults at risk.

It is critical that we protect the most vulnerable in our society, recognizing that vulnerability can often be present irrespective of youthfulness or advanced age. Wisconsin has a longstanding definition of "adult at risk", which refers to any adult who has a physical or mental condition that substantially impairs his or her ability to care for his or her needs and who has experienced, is currently experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or financial exploitation. Unfortunately, there remain a number of protections currently lacking for adults at risk, which Senate Bill 388 will institute:

- Allowing prosecutors to request that a court freeze or seize assets from a defendant who has been charged with a financial exploitation crime when the victim is an adult at risk in order to preserve them for restitution.
- Allowing an adult at risk who is seeking a domestic violence, individual-at-risk, or harassment restraining order to appear in a court hearing by telephone or live audiovisual means.
- Increasing the penalty for forcible sexual misconduct that is currently a second degree sexual assault to a first degree sexual assault (going from a Class C to a Class B Felony) if the victim is an adult at risk.
- Allowing a term of imprisonment that is imposed for a criminal conviction to be increased in length if the crime victim was an adult at risk.

SB 388 is supported by the Wisconsin Chapter of A-TEAM, a grassroots network of families who work legislatively to advance the cause of people with disabilities in the workplace, society, and home.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 388.