



SHAE SORTWELL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE * 2nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Hearing Testimony
Assembly Committee on Criminal and Public Safety
October 31, 2023
Assembly Bill 412

Chairman Spiros and members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety – Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on AB 412, relating to battery or threat to jurors and providing a penalty.

Jurors serve, arguably, the most important role in the U.S. judicial system. We entrust ordinary citizens to be fair and impartial judges of each other when accused of crimes. It is vital to the judicial process, and our republic as a whole, that the accused be judged by an unbiased jury of their peers.

The current battery to a juror law, § 940.20 (3), only applies once a verdict or indictment is reached, and the juror is harmed because of that decision. However, jurors can still be abused during a trial in order to impact its decision. Assembly Bill 412 updates Wisconsin statutes to protect jurors and their families while they are still convened and deliberating.

Making this change will ensure that everyone in Wisconsin has the opportunity for a fair trial by jury as guaranteed by the 6th amendment of the US Constitution and Article 1, Section 5 of the Wisconsin Constitution (trial by jury).

This legislation has the support from the Wisconsin Professional Police Association. It passed the Senate on a voice vote earlier in October.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this legislation and would gladly answer any questions the committee may have.