



# BOB DONOVAN

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## Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 77

Thank you, Chairman VanderMeer and members of the Committee on Transportation, for convening today to hear public testimony on Assembly Bill 77. This critical legislation addresses the growing threat posed by registration concealment devices, commonly known as "license plate flippers," which criminals increasingly exploit to evade law enforcement, facilitate criminal activity, and jeopardize public safety across Wisconsin.

Our law enforcement agencies are skilled, but the rise of "flippers" make it more difficult for officers to do their job. These manual, electronic, or mechanical devices designed to switch, hide, or alter license plates—presents a direct challenge to law enforcement's ability to identify and apprehend dangerous individuals. Current law requires that all motor vehicles display their Department of Transportation-issued registration plates and decals clearly. However, without specific prohibitions on concealment devices, law enforcement lacks the tools to address this emerging threat effectively. While this technology is relatively new, we must act decisively to stop its proliferation before it becomes a widespread problem.

Assembly Bill 77 responds directly to this challenge by prohibiting the sale, possession, purchase, installation, and use of registration plate concealment devices. It defines these devices as any mechanism designed to switch between plates, obstruct or conceal a plate, or alter its appearance to render the registration number unreadable. The bill also prohibits equipping a vehicle with such a device. Violations would be punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 90 days, or both. Additionally, vehicles equipped with these devices may be impounded, with reasonable towing and impoundment costs assessed to the owner.

This legislation is a targeted tool for law enforcement to enhance public safety. By equipping law enforcement with the authority to address flippers, Assembly Bill 77 closes a dangerous gap in state statute that criminals can exploit to evade accountability. This is a commonsense measure that strengthens our ability to hold criminals accountable and keep our roads safe. I urge the committee to support this bill and provide law enforcement with the tools they need to combat the misuse of registration concealment devices. Thank you for your consideration.

Bob Donovan

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Donovan".

State Representative  
61<sup>ST</sup> Assembly District



To: Members, Assembly Committee on Transportation  
From: Badger State Sheriffs' Association (BSSA)  
Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association (WS&DSA)  
Date: June 25, 2025  
**RE: Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 77**

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BSSA and WS&DSA submit these comments in support of AB 77, which prohibits the possession, sale, purchase, installation, and use of a registration plate concealment device, commonly known as “license plate flippers.”

The idea for this legislation is a result of a situation that occurred in Dodge County in 2023, where there was a stolen vehicle driven by an individual with multiple warrants in which law enforcement were able flag that the car as stolen. By the time the Sheriff deputies caught up with this individual, his license plate had changed. Turns out he had one of those James Bond-type license plate flippers, which can be purchased easily right now on Amazon and use in Wisconsin with no consequence.

This incident underscores the necessity of Assembly Bill 77. These devices, whether manual, electronic, or mechanical, allow individuals to switch between multiple plates, obscure their license plates from view, or alter the appearance of plates to avoid detection. Criminals are using this technology to evade law enforcement, making it harder to track stolen vehicles, enforce traffic laws, and ensure public safety.

Current law requires that all registered motor vehicles display their assigned license plates in a visible manner. AB 77 closes a dangerous loophole that criminals have been exploiting. By making it illegal to possess or use these devices, the bill provides law enforcement with an important tool to prevent their use in vehicle theft, human trafficking, and other crimes. Additionally, the penalties outlined in AB 77—a fine of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment of up to 90 days, along with potential vehicle impoundment—serve as a strong deterrent against their use.

The ability for law enforcement to accurately identify vehicles is critical to keeping our communities safe. This legislation will help prevent criminals from skirting the law and enhance the ability of officers to do their jobs effectively. Our organizations urge the committee to support AB 77 and help ensure that these dangerous devices are no longer accessible in Wisconsin.

We'd like to thank the authors for their help with this bill and appreciate the committee's time and consideration.

*The Badger State Sheriffs' Association represents all of Wisconsin's 72 elected county sheriffs. The Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association is a professional organization representing over 1,000 members, including sheriffs, deputies, and jail officers. Our organizations have a joint legislative committee and work closely on public safety issues of concern to our members.*