



# Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

## TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 278

Thank you, committee members, for attending today's hearing on Senate Bill 278.

This may be the simplest bill that will come before this committee. It simply changes a date from July 1, 2025 to July 1, 2027. That's it.

Since you probably want a little more information on the bill, I guess I can share some. This bill extends the sunset on the \$500,000 Community-Oriented Policing House (or COP House) grant program from the end of this biennium until the end of the next biennium.

COP Houses have been used with great success in Racine and elsewhere across the country, and it's easy to see why. Police officers perform daily duties in the facility, while building relationships as a member of a neighborhood. The police become a positive part of the neighborhood, rather than an occupying force to keep eyes on you or tell you that you're in trouble." COP Houses build relationships. Each COP House becomes a part of the community, where people feel safe and can safely access the services they need.

And the statistics prove that COP houses and community policing works. Crime rates plummet, including by up to 70% in some neighborhoods. In just one neighborhood, aggravated assaults dropped by 94% in just four years. It's a true, proven, violence prevention program.

For the last six months or so, I have been working with stakeholders in the City of Milwaukee to create a COP House on Milwaukee's south side, near Cristo Rey School. The underlying COP House grant program needs to be modified to allow the vision of this south side COP House to work. I will be working on separate legislation after the budget on this subject.

This bill just parks the \$500,000 that has already been allocated so that it doesn't get spent elsewhere for the next two years.

Again, it's a simple bill. And the simplest we'll probably hear this year. I hope it has your support.

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