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AB35 YELLOW ALERT TESTIMONY

Chairman Kleefisch thank you for holding a hearing on AB35 this morning. This bill is a very important bill for the residents of my district and since its introduction nearly one year ago has become important to constituents of many other districts around the state. The support we have received from people from Wood County to Dane County to Rock County and more has been instrumental in keeping this bill moving forward. I want to also thank Senator Moulton for taking on the Senate companion to this bill and look forward to action on this bill in both chambers in the near future. Now let me tell you a bit about AB35.

Just over twenty years ago (March 24, 1995), a small community in Wood County was shocked by the hit and run death of a young girl simply riding her bike near her home. There was confusion as to the details of what happened, whether accidental or intentional, but what is very clear is that the person responsible cowardly fled the scene. This bill creates a YELLOW alert system that several other states now employ to take advantage of modern technologies to rapidly spread information about an incident in order to capture individuals who lacking any human compassion or moral compass flee the scene of a serious accident.

AB 35 will utilize the state's existing network of freeway signs to broadcast information about vehicles suspected in hit-and-run incidents, giving police an additional resource to make an arrest in their investigation. This bill allows law enforcement to utilize the current statewide systems as a tool to apprehend perpetrators of deadly high and run incidents. The bill **REQUIRES** a law enforcement agency that receives a report of a hit-and-run incident to use the network to disseminate the report if: 1) a person has been killed or has suffered great bodily harm; 2) additional information is available about the incident that could identify the person or vehicle involved; and 3) an alert could help avert further harm or could aid in apprehending the person involved.

If those circumstances don't fit the incident no alert will be issued. Some have said this will clog the signs along our highways and make people stop paying attention, I believe that to be a false argument as we luckily very rarely see Amber alerts or Silver Alerts posted and when they do post people pay attention a great deal. For example the last Amber Alert issued following an abduction in the Green Bay area netted a good end result from a community in my district, about two hours away.

The City of Denver instituted a similar hit and run alert system in 2012, they saw a 76% arrest rate in cases where the alert was activated. The success of the program prompted Colorado's legislature to implement the program statewide. California passed the yellow alert bill in 2015 and started implementation just two weeks ago on Jan 1.


Maryland is in the process right now along with us.

People flee because they know there's little chance that they'll be caught. The Yellow Alert provides another tool for law enforcement to apprehend these criminals and have them brought to justice. We know from Colorado's experience that a yellow alert works to help law enforcement find hit-and-run perpetrators, and find justice for victims. Victims who were simply minding their own business out for a walk or biking.

This bill is just as much about preventing hit-and-runs as it is about solving them," If people know that their information will be broadcast on these signs and there's a chance they'll be caught, the likelihood of them fleeing will decrease.

Again thank you, for your time and attention today, I will be happy to answer any questions.

Scott Krug

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Krug". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Krug".

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To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety

From: Mike Austin, Government Affairs Director
Wisconsin Department of Justice

Date: January 14, 2016

Subject: Informational memo on Assembly Bill 35

Thank you Chairman Kleefisch and committee members for the opportunity to present you with written testimony on Assembly Bill 35. The Department of Justice (DOJ) appreciates your thoughtful consideration of this proposal.

We would also like to thank Representative Krug for his efforts to listen to our concerns and his attempts to address that through Assembly Amendment 1. That amendment would not erase the fiscal impact but would cut it down considerably.

DOJ currently operates three similar programs that broadcast information about crime in a similar manner to what is intended in Assembly Bill 35 through the Amber Alert, Silver Alert, and Crime Alert Network.

The Amber Alert system is utilized to disseminate urgent bulletins to the public concerning abducted children. In 2015, there were 5 Amber Alerts issued in Wisconsin. The newly created Silver Alert program was created to protect individuals with Alzheimer's and Dementia who go missing. In 2015, there were 74 Silver Alerts issued in Wisconsin. The Crime Alert Network was created in 2010 to give law enforcement officers the ability to send out crime alert bulletins rapidly to businesses and the general public. This subscriber based system issues on average 150 unique alerts each month to individuals and businesses in each county.

The original bill would have likely resulted in close to 100 Yellow Alerts each year. We believe that Assembly Amendment 1 will greatly reduce the number of Yellow Alerts issued but it will be difficult to determine when to issue that alert if an individual has not been killed at the scene. A victim often can die days after an incident and this would not be an effective tool.

A final point for discussion among committee members should be: Is this a tool that law enforcement needs to catch criminals and will this water down the other alerts currently utilized by law enforcement? Under current law these types of fatal hit and run accidents would already be decimated through the Crime Alert Network and in serious cases law enforcement would already make a determination to alert the media if it would be helpful in the investigation of the crime.

We hope this information is helpful in determining the need for this new Yellow Alert. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.