



Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

Thursday, October 14, 2021

Senate Bill 579

Chairman Wanggaard and committee members,

Thank you for taking the time today to hear testimony on Senate Bill 579.

The United States of America finds itself in true crisis when it comes to protecting our borders. Under President Biden's watch, we're at a 21-year high for illegal immigrant detentions. In August, 209,000 immigrants were detained. That number was about the same in July. Of those coming into the country that we know of, in the spring and summer, nearly 90 percent of the 50,000 migrants released by the Biden administration had not reported to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement within the required 60-day window. These illegal immigrants have not been vetted and are currently in our country and our state.

Illegal immigration is left up to the federal government to control and regulate. Unfortunately, this problem reaches into our state with human trafficking, drug trafficking, and other criminal activity that creates real problems for Wisconsin families.

How do we trust that people who don't follow our laws coming into our country will follow them once they're here?

To do our state's part in promoting safety for Wisconsin families, Senator Jagler, Representative Gundrum and I authored this bill that would do three things:

1. It ensures that law enforcement checks the lawful presence of a criminal with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
2. It requires law enforcement to hold someone not here legally until the federal government can take them into its custody.
3. It creates a report from the Department of Justice to create transparency for the public on these crimes.

Tracking the crimes committed by illegal immigrants and working with ICE to enforce the laws we have on the books is common sense. This bill puts the safety of Wisconsin families first and creates much needed transparency around the number of crimes being committed by illegal immigrants.

Thank you again for your time and consideration of this bill. I hope you will support this commonsense legislation.



RICK GUNDRUM

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 58TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 579

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety | October 14, 2021 | Room 411 South

Chairman Wanggaard, Vice-Chairman Wimberger and other honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 579 today. I am pleased to have authored this legislation with Senator Julian Bradley to ensure the safety of Wisconsinites never takes a backseat due to a lack of leadership at the federal level.

The crisis at the southern border has continued to worsen with each passing month. In July and August, the United States Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) had over 200,000 encounters with illegal immigrants. In September, thousands of Haitian illegal immigrants were released into the country.

These and other individuals enter the country illegally, are apprehended and given a court date—which could be years from now due to the massive backlog facing immigration courts. In the meantime, those individuals are released into the country. If they do not return for their court date, law enforcement/immigration authorities are put at a massive disadvantage to find them.

While the federal government handles enforcement and regulation of illegal immigration, its effects are felt in Wisconsin. Most notably, Wisconsin has to invest more time and resources into combatting human and drug trafficking.

Our bill seeks to address the shortcomings and lack of leadership at the federal level. Our bill ensures law enforcement are able to check the lawful presence of a criminal with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). It requires law enforcement to hold someone in Wisconsin illegally until the appropriate federal authority can take them into custody. Finally, our bill requires that data be reported to the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ). DOJ will report these statistics to the Legislature every six months.

Working with ICE to enforce the laws on the books and having DOJ record this data and present it to the Legislature ensures laws are followed and Wisconsinites have access to this important data. I am pleased with the work Senator Bradley and I have done to ensure the safety of our friends and neighbors comes first.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the distinguished members of this committee.