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Legislators Introduce Bipartisan Bill Addressing Teen Dating Violence

New legislation would incorporate teen dating violence curriculum into Wisconsin schools

(MADISON) – Representatives Joel Kleefisch (R-Oconomowoc), Melissa Sargent (D-Madison), and John Spiros (R-Marshfield) announced legislation today to help address teen dating violence, which is a public health problem across the country. LRB-2213/1 was circulated for co-sponsorship earlier today, and would create teen dating violence curriculum in schools across Wisconsin.

“Teen dating violence is an absolutely pervasive problem. Students often feel something isn’t right about the way they’re being treated, but they’re not sure what to call it, and they don’t know enough about relationships yet to know what they’re experiencing isn’t healthy or right,” Representative Sargent said. “We need to educate students on what healthy relationships are and teach them how to identify abuse when they see it, and that’s what this bill does.”

According to the [Center for Disease Control](#) and the [2013 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#), 1 in 5 female students and 1 in 10 male students experience physical and/or sexual dating violence, not including students who might experience emotional abuse, threatening, or harassment. These unhealthy relationship experiences can have lifelong health consequences, and for abusers, means they are more likely to perpetrate violence in adult relationships.

LRB-2213/1 will require school boards to adopt policies addressing teen dating violence, including:

- Prohibiting teen dating violence at schools or school-related events and activities;
- Model, age-appropriate instruction about preventing and responding to teen dating violence for pupils in grades 7 through 12;
- Training and procedures for identifying, preventing, and responding to teen dating violence for school district employees, and identifying school district employees responsible for receiving teen dating violence incident reports.

“I was proud to stand with my colleagues, Representative Kleefisch and Representative Spiros, today to introduce a bipartisan solution to addressing teen dating violence in Wisconsin. This is a commonsense piece of legislation to help address teen dating violence, and we look forward to this bill receiving earnest, bipartisan support this session,” Representative Sargent concluded.

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Melissa Sargent is a Representative in the Wisconsin State Assembly, representing the 48th Assembly District, which covers the east and north sides of the city of Madison and the village of Maple Bluff.