



ANDRÉ JACQUE

STATE SENATOR • 1ST SENATE DISTRICT

Phone: (608) 266-3512

Fax: (608) 282-3541

Sen.Jacque@legis.wi.gov

State Capitol · P.O. Box 7882

Madison, WI 53707-7882

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Senator André Jacque

April 14, 2021
(608) 266-3512

SEN. JACQUE'S PADDLEWHEEL BILL SPINS THROUGH SENATE *Measure would stop DOJ harassment of traditional Wisconsin charity fundraisers*

MADISON... The State Senate today overwhelmingly passed legislation by voice vote that would allow charitable groups across Wisconsin to raise money for important causes through paddlewheel raffles, without unknowingly and unintentionally committing a felony-level offense. The bill passed Senate committee earlier this session with bi-partisan support, and the backing of numerous charitable groups.

State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), author of the measure, said paddlewheel raffles are very popular throughout the state.

“Wisconsin’s many sportsmen’s clubs, civic and veterans’ organizations, churches, and numerous other non-profits throughout our state have fun and have supported many charitable causes through paddlewheels,” Sen. Jacque said. “A frequently used variation is the ‘meat raffle,’ a crowd favorite seen at events from church festivals to veteran’s hall fish fries.”

However, Sen. Jacque said groups who hold paddlewheel raffles at special events under their raffle license have been informed by Wisconsin’s Department of Justice, at the request of the Department of Administration, that they are fostering illegal gambling and are subject to up to a Class I Felony penalty.

“People are understandably shocked when they find out,” Sen. Jacque said. “Here they are trying to do good in their community, and they find out they may be committing a felony.”

Sen. Jacque said previous legislation now allows for popular raffles such as plastic and rubber duck races at special events to lawfully operate under a Class B raffle license. The winner in the raffle or race must be determined by a “drawing” with all tickets having an “equal opportunity to win.”

“This measure provides similar relief for a Class B raffle license to run paddlewheel raffles without inadvertently committing a Class I Felony,” Sen. Jacque said. “These games are also popular in Minnesota, which has already legalized paddlewheel raffles for charitable groups.”

The measure ([Senate Bill 170](#)) now heads to the State Assembly. Similar legislation passed both chambers unanimously last session without any registered opposition at any prior point, but was vetoed by [Gov. Evers, who could not give a reason for his veto when questioned](#).

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.