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JACQUE LEGISLATION TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY OF COURT PROCEEDINGS CLEARS STATE SENATE

MADISON, WI... Significant time and cost savings from virtual juvenile and adult criminal case proceedings are one step closer to reality today after a unanimous voice vote in the Wisconsin State Senate today of [Senate Bill 219](#), authored by State Sen. André Jacque, R- De Pere) and Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt.

“Remote court proceedings are another of the many tools that, while in use prior to Covid-19, became much more widely adopted due to changes in court operations during the pandemic,” Sen. Jacque said. “But it is important to note that several states had already adopted more expansive use of technological advances for court appearances on a permanent basis without requiring an emergency order.”

Under current law, any party in a juvenile court plea hearing may participate by telephone or other live audiovisual means, except for a juvenile who intends to admit the facts of a delinquency petition. This bill eliminates that exception, unless good cause to the contrary is shown.

“For example, juveniles who wish to make admissions and enter a treatment facility are currently precluded from doing so electronically, and have been personally appearing in empty courtrooms in some cases,” Sen. Jacque said. “They should also be allowed to do so by telephonic or audiovisual means.”

The bill also removes the limitation on criminal court proceedings subject to virtual proceedings, again provided there would be no negative impacts on the case. It will allow for defendants to enter pleas, accept plea deals, receive sentencing, deal with interstate detainer proceedings, and allow individuals to enter treatment more quickly.

“This legislation has received support from many stakeholders within Wisconsin’s court system, including the Wisconsin District Attorneys Association, Wisconsin Public Defenders Office, and numerous court and county officials,” Sen. Jacque said. “Incorporating available communications technology infrastructure to enhance court operations will reduce transportation costs and bring more efficiencies to the justice system.”

The measure now goes to the State Assembly.

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.