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“FUND THE POLICE” AND BIPARTISAN POLICE IMPROVEMENT BILLS CLEAR STATE SENATE

MADISON – The Wisconsin Senate approved four bills today focused on accountability with and for police. The bills, which are part of the Public Safety PACT package authored by Senators Van Wanggaard (R-Racine), Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee), and Alberta Darling (R-River Hills), were formulated through conversations with legislators, law enforcement, and reform advocates. PACT is an acronym for Police Accountability, Community involvement and Transparency is designed to improve policing in Wisconsin.

“Today, we took meaningful steps to improve and protect policing in Wisconsin. I am so thankful to have had Senators Taylor and Darling, work with me on the PACT, and to help get them over the finish line in the Senate,” said Wanggaard. “By focusing on accountability, community involvement, and transparency, we strengthen the bond and renew the relationship between police and the community. The PACT bills will improve safety and the relationship between police and the people they serve, and I am glad they had bipartisan support”

The bills passed by the Senate today largely focused on accountability. They were:

- Senate Bill 119 – The “Fund the Police” bill. This bill reduces a municipality’s Shared Revenue payment if the municipality defunds the police. Every Republican voted in favor of Senate Bill 119. Every Democrat voted against the “Fund the Police” bill.
- Senate Bill 120 – Which requires police officers report excessive use of force and provides officers with whistleblower protection. This bill passed the Senate 31-2.
- Senate Bill 121 – Which prohibits a use of force policy to authorize chokeholds except in self-defense or life threatening situations. This bill passed the Senate on a voice vote.
- Senate Bill 199 – Which prohibits a police officers from engaging in sexual conduct with individuals in their custody. This bill was authored by Senator Taylor, with Senator Wanggaard second, and passed the Senate on a voice vote.

“I am dumbfounded, but not surprised that every Democrat opposed “Funding the Police” and that one Democratic senator called self-defense “loophole.” Who in their right mind opposes self-defense?” said Senator Wanggaard. “Policing is difficult, and often thankless, work. It is the most essential service that a community has and it deserves to be protected and funded.”

The PACT bills now go to the State Assembly for action. Last month, the State Senate passed four additional bills, Senate Bills 117 and 122, 123, 124, focusing on community involvement and transparency. Each of those bills passed the state senate on bipartisan votes.

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