

Date: January 24, 2020

Re: AB 44/SB 53 RE: Barricade devices on interior doors in schools - Informational

From: Barbara Beckert, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Director Milwaukee Officer

Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) is the designated Protection and Advocacy system for Wisconsinites with disabilities. DRW is charged with protecting and enforcing the legal rights of individuals with disabilities, including mental health disabilities, investigating systemic abuse and neglect, and ensuring access to supports and services.

AB 44/ SB 53 would provide that the Department of Safety and Professional Services may not prohibit, and a city, village, or town may not enact or enforce an ordinance that prohibits, a public or private elementary or secondary school from installing a barricade device on an interior door in the school building.

While DRW appreciates the intent of the bill's authors to address school safety, we are concerned about the possible impact on students with disabilities, especially those with mobility impairments.

- As noted in August 22, 2019 testimony from the Wisconsin Department of Justice Office of School Safety, there is no known barricade device that is compliant with either the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or national and state buildings and fire codes.
- We are concerned the school barricade devices may impede the ability of students with disabilities to escape a room during an emergency.
- We are also concerned about the potential for misuse of these devices. A barricade device could be used by a perpetrator to block entrance of a teacher or school personnel to school rooms with a perpetrator and students inside. Students with disabilities are particularly vulnerable in such situations.

Thank you for your consideration of these informational comments.

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