



**WISCONSIN FAMILY ACTION**  
Marriage|Family|Life|Liberty

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 584**  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY**  
**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021**  
**JULAIN K. APPLING, PRESIDENT**

Thank you, Chairman Wanggaard and committee members, for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 584. Wisconsin Family Action supports this bill.

Senate Bill 584 would essentially bring Wisconsin law into conformity with the federal law regarding whether individuals can carry a concealed weapon into a church that has a school. Wisconsin's current law prohibits concealed carry on any school's premises and extends even to prohibiting concealed carry in a church that has a school when school is not in session.

Churches with related schools should not be treated any differently from churches without schools, which under Wisconsin law have the option of whether or not they allow concealed carry. The fact that a church has a school should not put that church in a separate category. In a sense, the way this law works in our state, the school becomes the controlling entity, not the church.

However, the vast majority of churches with related schools operate just the opposite, with the church being the controlling entity and the school being a ministry or mission of the church, under the legal and corporate structure of the church. I say that because common sense would make one think that this would mean the controlling law would be that which is applicable to the church more than the school. However, I suspect this concealed carry issue is just one area where we might have some laws that invert that.

Most churches in Wisconsin are incorporated here as not-for-profit organizations, including those with schools, which makes them legitimate private "businesses," if you will. Wisconsin law allows private businesses to determine for themselves whether they will permit concealed carry on their premises. Churches with religious schools should have that same option. Frankly, we believe any private school should have the option to allow or disallow concealed carry. The bill proposed last session provided for that.

That said, this bill does appropriately address the issue of allowing churches with schools the freedom to choose for themselves whether they will permit concealed carry—and that is exactly as it should be. SB 584 has enough safeguards built in that I would assume those who had misgivings about the bill proposed last session, would be good with this more restrictive proposal.

As we know, our churches have become targets for individuals meaning to do harm to many people at once. Church staff and individuals attending those places should have the right to defend their people, their property and their possessions without fear of breaking the law.

Thank you to Senator Roth and Representative Pronschinske for bringing this bill forward. We urge this committee to support this bill and move it quickly to the full Senate for a vote.