



LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP

ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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Date: January 30th, 2020

Re:

- Assembly Bill 805 Relating to: recommendation to revoke parole, probation, and extended supervision if a person is charged with a crime.
- Assembly Bill 806 Relating to: acts for which a juvenile may be placed in correctional placement or the Serious Juvenile Offender Program.
- Assembly Bill 807 Relating to: mandatory minimum sentence for three or more convictions for retail theft and providing a penalty.
- Assembly Bill 808 Relating to: prosecuting a violent felon for the crime of illegal possession of a firearm.
- Assembly Bill 809 Relating to: earned release from parole or extended supervision and discharge from probation.

Position: **OPPOSE**

To: The Wisconsin State Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here to represent myself, having spent my career as a police officer, as a resident of Viroqua, and as a speaker for the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP). LEAP is a nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety. After investigating hundreds of cases as a detective, I know how important it is to prioritize so that our justice system resources are used effectively.

Bills 805 and 809: With parole and probation, I see us keeping more people on parole than our neighboring states do, and they stay on parole

for twice as long.¹ We send people on parole and probation back to prison [at higher rates than our neighbors](#) do.²

Our legislature should not force probation and parole officers to hold people longer and return them to jail even more often. Officers need to be able to use their discretion to keep low-risk offenders out of the justice system. I oppose Bills 805 and 809 because we need a system that reduces recidivism by prioritizing and focusing resources, instead of looking for more ways to send someone back to jail..

Bill 808: Our prosecutors also need to use their discretion to focus resources on the greatest threats to safety. Bill 808 would prevent prosecutors from considering the facts of an individual case, whether it concerns a gang hitman or a woman convicted of assaulting an abusive husband. If prosecutors aren't considering the facts of each case, then what purpose does the court system serve? I oppose this bill because if the legislature strips discretion from prosecutors, we are preventing them from prioritizing resources on cases that will make our communities safer.

Bill 807: We also need to respect the expertise and authority of our judges. Judges hear each case from the bench and draw on their experience and years of study to determine a just sentence. By setting a mandatory minimum sentence for shoplifting, the legislature would tie judges' hands, blocking them from handing down a sentence that reflects the reality of why the crime was committed and how to prevent it from happening in the future. Incarceration is usually the wrong response for shoplifting. Most defendants would benefit more from drug treatment or mental health support.. Communities benefit when people who commit low-level crimes are rehabilitated, not sent to a "school for criminals" that will expose them to far more serious criminality. I strongly oppose Bill 807.

Bill 806: We need to be even more cautious about incarcerating juveniles than we are for adults. Juvenile detention facilities surround children with negative influences, while weakening their positive relationships in family

¹ "Report: Wisconsin's high rates of probation, parole driving up" 23 Jan. 2019, https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/report-wisconsin-s-high-rates-of-probation-parole-driving-up/article_09166fbc-8a77-5b1a-b00b-c70dfcddad9e.html. Accessed 29 Jan. 2020.

² "The Wisconsin Community Corrections Story - Columbia" 1 Jan. 2019, <https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Wisconsin%20Community%20Corrections%20Story%20final%20online%20copy.pdf>. Page 2. Accessed 29 Jan. 2020.

and school. From 2000 to 2010, our state demonstrated this fact by reducing juvenile incarceration by 43 percent and simultaneously watching youth arrests drop by 36 percent.³ When we keep children in school and out of the justice system wherever possible, we set them up to grow and succeed. I oppose Bill 806 because it would reverse our progress and increase youth crime.

I urge you to reject all five of these bills in order to allow our criminal justice professionals the discretion to prioritize resources, focus on the greatest threats to public safety, and reduce reoffending.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my professional expertise in opposition to these bills.

Detective Dave Doddridge (Ret.)
Los Angeles Police Department, CA
Speaker, Law Enforcement Action Partnership
Resident of Viroqua, WI

³ "Reducing youth incarceration in the United States - National"
https://www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/Comeback-States-Report_FINAL.pdf. Accessed 29 Jan. 2020. Pages 3, 23.