



For Immediate Release
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Wisconsin to Bring Back Bounty Hunters

A proposal in the recently passed State Budget brings back the practice of commercial bail bondsman in Wisconsin. "I have signed onto a letter to Governor Walker asking him to veto this item, a practice which has been banned in our state since 1979," said Rep. Steve Doyle (D-Onalaska). This provision was attached to the budget at the last minute without any public hearing or debate in the Joint Finance Committee.

"This issue keeps coming back like a bad penny. There was an attempt in the last budget cycle to bring back bail bondsman and it was vetoed by the Governor," Doyle said. "I am hopeful the same thing will happen this time to this devastating blow to the criminal justice system in our state."

The re-establishment of the for profit bail bondsman industry is not beneficial and may have an adverse effect on our judicial system based on the experiences in other states according to the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association. They are concerned about the use of private bond enforcement agents or "bounty hunters" with no training and little oversight.

The decision about the setting of bail and making sure the accused will remain in jail or be allowed to post bail should remain with the judicial system. "States which have bail bondsman have experienced recurring corruption due to a bail system based primarily on profit," said Doyle. The practice of commercial bail bonds was abolished in Wisconsin after debate by the Legislature and with the support of the criminal justice system. "Something as important to the safety and welfare of our citizens should not have been quietly tucked in the budget in the middle of the night," Doyle said.

"The Governor vetoed this in the last budget, and nothing has changed to warrant bounty hunters in the state now. I signed the letter asking him to veto this from the budget, because we need to have public input at the very least before we make such a drastic change," said Doyle.