CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

1.13.20

Topline Messages

Criminal justice reform has become a national, bi-partisan issue, with both federal and state-led initiatives in approximately 45 states to address rising prison populations, costs, and to avoid the massive costs of constructing new prison facilities, while also maintaining public safety.

Wisconsin communities need smart policies to address crime, expand alternative treatment opportunities and reduce recidivism rates.

Crime is best reduced when the community is brought together. In Milwaukee, <u>homicides are down for the second year in a row</u> because of that effort. Led by the Office of Violence Prevention, the city of Milwaukee is moving in the right direction. This was done at a fraction of the cost and without increased penalties or new prison spending.

Rep. Goyke Criminal Justice Reform Package (supported by Governor Evers)

Last week, Rep. Goyke introduced the Wisconsin Corrections Reform & Reinvestment Initiative. The reforms address:

- Non-criminal revocations
- Wisconsin's earned release system
- Changes to community supervision

These proposals provide a better alternative, to safely reduce the prison population and re-invest savings to reduce crime.

You can read more about these bills from this recent State Journal article.

First Step Act

Last year, President Trump signed the "First Step Act", legislation aimed at overhauling the criminal justice system in an effort to reduce the number of people in the nation's prisons and help former inmates rejoin society.

The law would give more discretion to judges when sentencing people convicted of some federal drug crimes, boost rehabilitation efforts, and place prisoners closer to family in some cases. All intended to reduce recidivism rates.

Jared Kushner Visit

This week, Jared Kushner is speaking in Milwaukee. He will tout the First Step Act, signed by President Trump in 2018. The GOP bills go against the First Step Act.

Why do Wisconsin GOP Legislators disagree with Trump and their fellow Wisconsin GOP Congressmen that voted for the First Step Act?

GOP "Tough on Crime" Bill Package

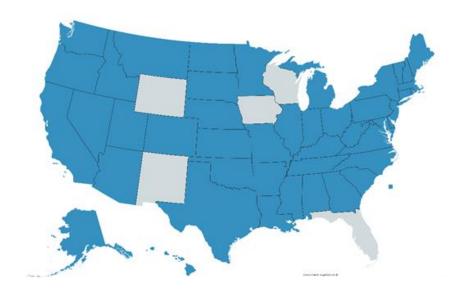
The bills introduced by legislative Republicans today **do the exact opposite of the efforts** at the federal level in the First Step Act. These efforts are regressive and will take Wisconsin in the wrong direction.

Wisconsin's criminal justice system has the worst, or close to the worst, racial disparities in the country. Efforts to reduce judicial discretion, reduce prosecutorial discretion, increase mandatory minimums, etc. will make our unequal system worse.

Our prisons are overcrowded - at 133% capacity. We face the possibility to building a new prison if these GOP bills pass.

One bill, involving revocations, was introduced last session - and the GOP amended their own bill to include \$300 million for the DOC to build a new prison. Will they be willing to put their money where their mouth is again?

These bills go in the opposite direction of the clear national trend. 45 states have enacted some form of criminal justice reform to reduce penalties or reduce the prison population. Below is a map of states that have enacted criminal justice reform policies.



Many of the states shown above enacted reforms to address rising prison populations, costs, and to avoid the massive costs of constructing new prison facilities. Often these efforts are bipartisan and justice reform could be an area we agree on.

Recent examples include

- Louisiana: Dem Governor and GOP Legislature worked together to pass meaningful reforms.
- Maryland: GOP Governor worked with a Dem Legislature to do the same.

Under Wisconsin's divided government, this is the type of bi-partisan collaboration people want.