



To: Members, Joint Finance Committee
From: Badger State Sheriffs' Association
County Law Enforcement Professionals of Wisconsin
Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association
Wisconsin Professional Police Association
Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association
Wisconsin Troopers' Association, Inc.

Date: April 20, 2017

Re: **Front License Plates Solve Crimes and Save Lives**



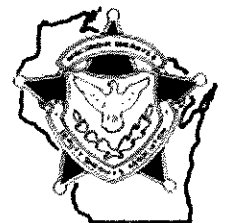
Our law enforcement associations respectfully request you do not include any provision to eliminate the front license plate in the transportation budget. Front license plates assist law enforcement to quickly identify vehicles in emergency situations and track down criminals. **Without a front license plate, law enforcement and citizens lose a critical tool for working together to ensure public safety.**



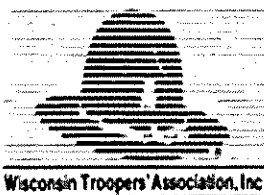
The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) included an option to eliminate the front license plate in their alternative five percent budget submission. This shortsighted option generates less than \$2.5 million in annual savings at the risk of public safety and monetary losses. The governor did not include this option in his budget.



Countless crimes have been solved thanks to a front plate on a car. Our organizations have collected numerous examples to demonstrate how front license plates solve a variety of crimes from across the state – including murder, sexual assault, hit-in-run, OWI, drug trafficking, carjacking and driving with a revoked/suspended license.



A growing body of statistical evidence supports the importance of license plates in protecting public safety. In August 2012, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute conducted a study concluding dual rather than single license plates increased the opportunity for law enforcement officials to correctly identify vehicles. Per the report, field studies showed a 97 percent read rate for parked vehicles in two plate states and 76 percent in one plate states.¹



States that consider this option quickly find that the public safety benefit, greatly outweigh the minor savings. In 2013, Ohio established a License Plate Safety Task Force and recommended the state maintain current law requiring two license plates. After hearing testimony overwhelmingly supporting two license plates, the Task Force recommended that “readable front and rear plates assist law enforcement officials from apprehending criminals and can indeed prevent crimes before they occur.”

As you consider all savings options in the transportation budget, we appeal that you not contemplate this alternative any further. License plates are a simple safety and law enforcement tool, allowing for

¹ Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Front License Plate Market Research: Comparison of Single Versus Dual License Plates. (2012)

faster vehicle identification and criminal apprehension.

Below we have included several recent examples to further demonstrate that **front license plates solve crimes.**

FOND DU LAC, SEPTEMBER 2016, ASSAULT

A male assaulted his girlfriend and fled the scene in a vehicle. The license plate was dispatched out. As the vehicle drove past me, I could read the front license plate. The front plate allowed me to positively identify that car as the fleeing domestic suspect and stop the perpetrator.

FOND DU LAC, DRUNK DRIVER

I received a report of an intoxicated driver who tried to ram the complainant. The complainant provided the suspect's license plate and direction of travel. As the vehicle passed me, I could read the front license plate to confirm that was the suspect vehicle. The driver was arrested for OWI and cited for DCMV. In this case, the front plate helped immensely to identify the suspect vehicle when it was dark and hard to discern the exact vehicle model during other traffic. Front plates are reflective and easier to read while driving past.

KAUKAUNA, 2016, HIT AND RUN

In this case, a hit and run led to damage of public property. The striking vehicle left the roadway and damaged property, then left the other side of the roadway, striking a snow bank. The front license plate was imprinted perfectly in the snow. The case was later closed with a suspected drunk driver.

LACROSSE, MAY 2016, BANK ROBBERY

In this bank robbery, the case would not have been solved without front plates. We got a front plate from a video, but no rear plate. The vehicle backed into a parking stall and left a different direction so it did not pass the camera that would have picked up a front plate.

MILWAUKEE, APRIL 2015, HIT AND RUN INJURING A DETECTIVE

Milwaukee Police could charge and convict someone for a felony hit and run for injuring an on-duty Waukesha County Sheriff's detective last year because he left behind his front bumper containing the plate.

NEW BERLIN, JUNE 30, 2016, STOLEN VEHICLE

Police noticed the front plate of an approaching car that appeared to have spray paint on it. The vehicle was subsequently identified as a stolen vehicle and was returned to the owner.

WAUKESHA, ARMED ROBBERY

Approximately two years ago, we responded to an armed robbery at a trampoline park for children in the City of Pewaukee and a suspect vehicle was identified by a responding squad equipped with an ALPR through a front license plate read. This ultimately lead to the arrest of a gang related armed robbery group that was committing violent armed robberies throughout Southeastern Wisconsin.

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