



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

FOR ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Mayor Mason and Members of the City Council
730 Washington Ave.
Racine, WI 53403

May 19, 2022

Mayor Mason and Members of the City Council,

The events that unfolded in Milwaukee this last weekend demonstrate a growing and concerning trend across the state – violent crime is on the rise. Record setting crime is not unique to Milwaukee.

The City of Racine appears to be on the cusp of setting records of its own. [Homicides in Racine have doubled so far in 2022](#). Just last weekend, the city saw its sixth homicide this year and it's only May. This year, Racine is on track for the most homicides since at least 2017, the year Mayor Mason was first elected, and before most of the Council was elected. Statistics from the Racine Police Department reveal a 49% increase in shots fired calls for service. Further, nearly twice as many people have been shot this year when compared to the same time last year.

Property crime is also on the rise. Following years of declining rates of motor vehicle theft, incidents in the city are the highest they have been since before Mayor Mason and most of you were elected.

Immediate action must be taken to put more officers on the street. [Research](#) has shown that a greater law enforcement presence has a positive effect on lowering crime rates. With the lowest number of officers on our streets in at least a decade, it is no wonder crime rates are on the rise. Currently the Racine Police Department has 20 vacancies. This session, the legislature worked to pass a package of bills aimed at supporting, recruiting and retaining law enforcement officers. Unfortunately, Governor Evers vetoed every bill that reached his desk.

While Governor Evers' veto pen prevented state-wide investments in our officers, there are actions to take at the local level to keep crime at bay. We appreciate Monday's press conference where the Mayor urged citizens to support the police and its efforts for public safety, but actions speak louder than words. Racine's hiring freezes and cuts of 11 authorized police officers have made Racine's neighborhoods less safe. Based on recent [reports](#), Commissioner John Tate, who sits on the Racine Common Council, supports letting violent criminals out on parole.

Most recently, President Biden urged local officials to use federal COVID funds to invest in hiring additional law enforcement officers. The City of Racine has been allocated \$46 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. With the second round of ARPA funds on their way, we urge you to commit a substantial amount of these funds towards reducing crime and protecting communities by investing in additional policing. Racine police is already outnumbered. Don't just reverse the reductions you've made in the past – increase force strength.

With the ARPA funds, you have a unique opportunity to show your community that you are addressing public safety by using those funds to support of police. It shows the community they can support the police too.

Sincerely,

Representative Robin Vos
State Representative – 63rd District

Senator Van Wanggaard
State Senator – 21st District

Representative Robert Wittke
State Representative – 62nd District