



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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

Secretary Kevin A. Carr
Wisconsin Department of Corrections
3099 E. Washington Ave.
Madison, WI 53704

May 8, 2019

The Honorable Tony Evers
Governor, State of Wisconsin
Room 115 East, State Capitol
Hand Delivered

Dear Governor Evers and Secretary Carr,

The recent announcement from the Department of Corrections about the formation of the Critical Vacancy Rate Add-On Pilot Program, which will provide an additional \$5 per hour for only some officers based solely on the corrections facility in which they work, has raised concern in our caucus about the process used to determine who received those pay increases. All of Wisconsin's corrections officers face challenges as they work to keep their facilities secure and the public safe while also helping to rehabilitate offenders. Singling out some officers over others to receive the benefit was not well thought out. It is fundamentally unfair and creates unnecessary animosity in a system that already needs reform.

As state representatives with DOC facilities in our districts, we absolutely agree that providing raises for our correctional officers is the right thing to do. Perhaps President Ronald Reagan said it best when describing their job:

"No group of Americans has a more difficult or less publicly visible job than the brave men and women who work in our correctional facilities."

As you are aware, the recent legislative audit of the DOC determined that the vacancy rate for positions reached 14% statewide as of June 2018, which is an increase of 7.3% over 2014. That same audit showed the average starting wage for Wisconsin correctional officers is \$16.32 per hour, which is approximately \$2.00 per hour less than the average for Midwestern states.

Changes to compensation should be addressed in the upcoming state budget in order to find a sustainable solution, rather than providing temporary raises based on temporary department funds. We look forward to working with the Committee on Joint Finance to ensure all of our correctional officers are treated fairly for the incredibly difficult, but important work that they do.

Sincerely,



Robin J Vos
Speaker



Jim Steineke
Majority Leader



Michael Schraa
Chair, Corrections Committee



Mary Felzkowski
Asst. Majority Leader



Barbara Dittrich
38th Assembly District



James Edming
87th Assembly District



Jesse James
68th Assembly District



Tony Kurtz
50th Assembly District



Loren Oldenburg
96 Assembly District



Kevin Petersen
40th Assembly District



Jon Plumer
42nd Assembly District



Treig Pronschinske
92 Assembly District



Timothy Ramthun
59th Assembly District



Rob Stafsholt
29th Assembly District



David Steffen
4th Assembly District



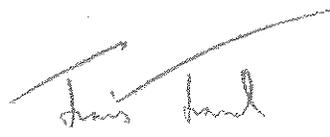
Rob Summerfield
67th Assembly District



Rob Swearingen
34th Assembly District



Jeremy Thiesfeldt
52nd Assembly District



Travis Tranel
49th Assembly District