



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Criminalizing Homelessness is not a Solution to Homelessness

MADISON - State Representative Mike Bare (D-Verona) released the following statement after the Wisconsin State Assembly voted to pass Assembly Bill 689, legislation that would change the way that the Department of Administration administers a number of grant programs that alleviate homelessness by creating “pay for performance” requirements for the grants.

“Nothing in this bill will help people experiencing homelessness. Having homelessness in Wisconsin is a choice we are making, and we should not keep making that choice. During the public hearing, the Department of Administration testified that it already does a robust system of review before granting the precious few dollars that this bill seeks to redirect. What they need is more resources to help people who are experiencing homelessness.”

“In 2022, the Interagency Council on Homelessness, chaired by the Governor, unanimously adopted and released their ‘Welcoming Wisconsin Home’ report. I offered an amendment today that would have included several of their recommendations that had been removed during the state budget process. Unfortunately, the Republican majority wouldn’t even allow an up or down vote on that amendment.”

“Finally, and worst of all, this bill would criminalize homelessness in Wisconsin. It is impossible to understand how 30 days imprisonment or a \$500 fine for people who don’t have \$500 is something other than Republicans’ continued villainization of poor people. Having homelessness in Wisconsin is a choice we are making, and we shouldn’t keep making that choice. There are viable and evidence-based ideas about what to do, and I look forward to working on bipartisan solutions for those experiencing homelessness.”

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