



WISCONSIN CHAPTER

National Association of Social Workers

10/21/09
File
Bill

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Dear Senate and Assembly Sponsors of Assembly Bill 269/Senate Bill 219:

I am writing to express our concerns regarding Assembly Bill 269/Senate Bill 219:

We believe this very well intended bill could have some unintentional consequences affecting people with mental illness, development disabilities, with limited English capacity and/or living in predominately minority communities. We are concerned that some of these individuals with limited capacity may receive a felony conviction although they had absolutely no intention of harming an officer and may even be innocent of the crime for which they were arrested. Although proponents of this bill claim that individuals with limited capacity or other extenuating circumstances will not be charged with a felony, we are not convinced that a reduction of charges for these individuals will happen in all cases or in all jurisdictions.

We do understand that this bill is intended to protect the safety of police officers by creating a deterrent for criminals to resist and/or flee arrest. This is an important legislative goal. We would like to see a bill with this goal that does not have the potential of causing harm to the individuals we have identified above with limited capacities.

Thank you for considering our concerns about this bill.

Sincerely yours,

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