



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

June 25, 2013

Governor Scott Walker
115 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker,

On behalf of our constituents and law enforcement officials around the state of Wisconsin, we respectfully request that you exercise your power of partial veto regarding the provision in the recently passed 2013-15 State Budget that allows for the practice of commercial bail bonds in Wisconsin. We applauded your actions last biennium when you removed this harmful provision from the 2011-13 state budget and requested a more measured approach. Unfortunately, the budget being presented to you includes a blatant bail bonds industry giveaway that fails to meet your stated requirement. Even worse, it was added to the budget by the Joint Finance Committee just before dawn with no public hearing or discussion.

Wisconsin wisely prohibited for-profit bail bonds in 1979 because the practice undermines the authority of judges and threatens the integrity of judicial elections. The bail bonds provision inserted in the budget has received strong opposition from our elected judges, including the entire First Judicial District of Wisconsin, as well as prosecutors, the Wisconsin Association of Criminal Defense Attorneys, the Badger State Sheriff's Association, the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association and all levels of the criminal justice system throughout.

Introducing profit into the pre-trial justice system distorts decisions previously made in the interest of public safety alone. Furthermore, this provision disproportionately impacts low income individuals, and drives up the taxpayer costs of our corrections system. Incentivizing profit has repeatedly led to a culture of rampant corruption in other states, where bail bonds companies use their considerable wealth and political influence to contribute to candidates that allow these companies to operate.

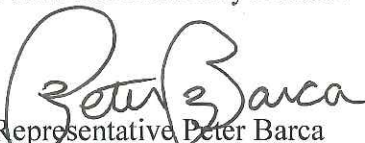
The decision about whether the accused goes free in our state should be in the hands of our judges, who make considerations based upon whether a person is a threat to public safety or is a risk of flight. In states that operate with the commercial bail bond system, decisions about the accused are in the hands of a private business whose goal is to make a profit. Since bail bond companies make additional money granting bonds to higher-bail defendants than lower bail, lower risk defendants, our criminal justice system would return to a situation where decisions of release are governed by for-profit businesses who decide who to offer bonds to. A 2010 feature on National Public Radio highlighted that counties and states spent \$9 billion annually detaining individuals who could not afford bail or bail deposits. Increased costs are likely to be the result in Wisconsin as well without your partial veto.


This corruptive practice was prohibited in 1979 in Wisconsin, and deserves at the very least a public hearing. This provision should not have been slipped into the state budget by the Joint Finance committee at the last minute and at 5:00 a.m. It should be presented as a stand-alone bill to allow public input and deliberate consideration of the consequences of enabling a practice that other states are currently moving in the opposite direction on.

We join the long list of public safety officials and judges who ask you to veto the bail bond provision and remove it from the 2013-2015 State Budget. Thank you for your consideration.


Sincerely,

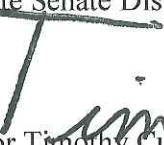

Representative Gordon Hintz
54th State Assembly District



Representative Peter Barca
64th State Assembly District


Representative Terese Berceau
77th State Assembly District



Representative Janet Bewley
94th State Assembly District



Senator Tim Carpenter
3rd State Senate District

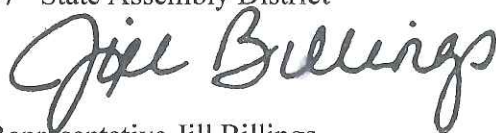

Senator Timothy Cullen
15TH Senate District

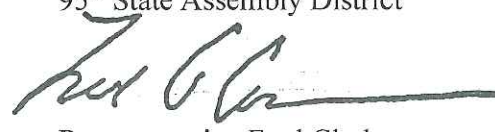

Representative Steve Doyle
94th State Assembly District



Senator Lena Taylor
4th State Senate District

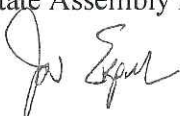

Representative Mandela Barnes
11th Assembly District

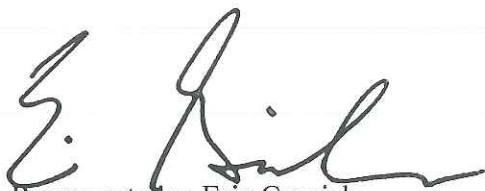

Representative Penny Bernard Schaber
57th State Assembly District


Representative Jill Billings
95th State Assembly District

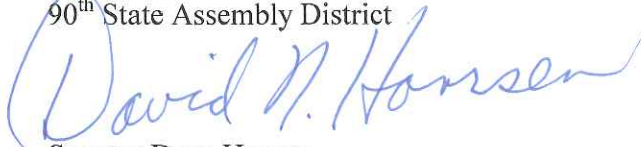

Representative Fred Clark
81st State Assembly District


Representative Chris Danou
92nd State Assembly District


Senator Jon Erpenbach
27th State Senate District



Representative Eric Genrich
90th State Assembly District



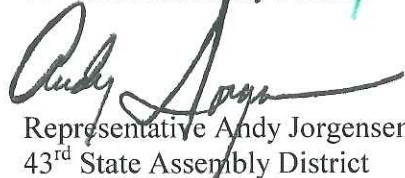
Senator Dave Hansen
30th State Senate District



Representative Gary Hebl
46th State Assembly District



Representative Brett Hulsey
78th State Assembly District



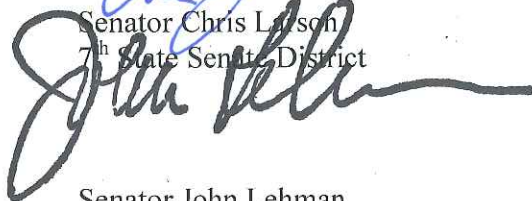
Representative Andy Jorgensen
43rd State Assembly District



Representative Frederick Kessler
12th State Assembly District



Senator Chris Larson
7th State Senate District



Senator John Lehman
21st State Senate District



Senator Mark Miller
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Representative Tod Ohnstad
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Representative Even Goyke
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Senator Nikiya Harris
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Representative Dianne Hesselbein
79th State Assembly District



Senator Robert Rauch
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47th State Assembly District



Representative Debra Kolste
44th State Assembly District



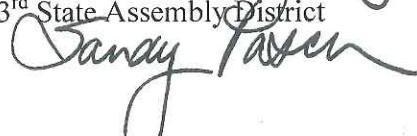
Senator Julie Lassa
24th State Senate District



Representative Cory Mason
66th State Assembly District



Representative Nick Milroy
73rd State Assembly District




Representative Sandy Pasch
10th State Assembly District



Representative Sondy Pope
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Representative Daniel Riemer
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Representative Katrina Shankland
71st State Assembly District



Representative Christine Sinicki
20th State Assembly District



Representative Chris Taylor
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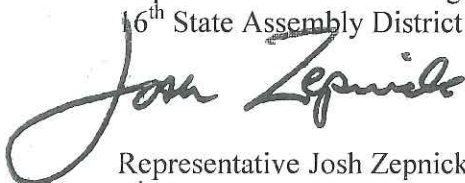
Senator Kathleen Vinehout
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Senator Robert Wirth
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Representative Leon Young
16th State Assembly District



Representative Josh Zepnick
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Representative Jon Richards
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Representative Janis Ringhand
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Representative Melissa Sargent
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Senator Jennifer Shilling
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Representative Stephen Smith
75th State Assembly District




Representative Amy Sue Vruwink
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Representative Dana Wachs
91st State Assembly District



Representative Mandy Wright
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