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# HOWARD MARKLEIN

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STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

## Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

March 4, 2016

### Collaboration Works Across Government

This past week, county Sheriffs from several counties in the 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District were at the State Capitol as Governor Scott Walker signed Assembly Bill (AB) 522 to become Act 164. I was proud to be the Senate lead on this bill and authored Senate Bill (SB) 389, the Senate version of the bill.

Act 164 addresses the unpredictability of reimbursements paid by the state to counties for housing and holding prisoners who have violated their conditions of probation, parole, or extended supervision. The law specifies that the Department of Corrections (DOC) is to reimburse a county \$40 per day for holding an individual, with the ability to pro-rate the reimbursement if funding was not available for a variety of reasons.

Act 164 gives the DOC flexibility to charge a reasonable fee to violators of probation, parole and those on extended supervision to reimburse the department for the costs associated with providing supervision services. The reimbursement rate remains the same, but DOC is required to use money collected from supervision fees if the appropriation to reimburse counties for probation, parole, and extended supervision is insufficient for reimbursing a county for maintenance of a person placed in a county jail or other county facility pending the disposition of parole, extended supervision, or probation revocation proceedings. This change will insure that counties are fully reimbursed for their costs.

All of the Sheriffs from the counties I represent asked for this bill. The last time the counties were paid at a rate of \$40 per day was in 2004. Since then, the costs of housing violators has increased, but the reimbursement rate has varied to an average of \$28.08 to \$32.55 per day. Act 164 gives the department flexibility to collect more from violators to cover the costs for which they need to reimburse the counties.

The Sheriffs who attended the signing told me that our collaboration is a great example of the way that different units of government can come together to solve problems. This problem was not just an issue between one county and the DOC. It was a problem suffered by all of our counties and resulted from statutory language that needed to be updated. The solution also would not require additional state taxpayer resources.

Collaboration among the Sheriffs, county governments, DOC and the state legislature produced a positive result for everyone involved. The counties will be reimbursed for their services. DOC received more flexibility to accomplish their mission. The legislature updated state statute to provide for this flexibility.

Iowa County Sheriff Steve Michek said, "I have been Sheriff of Iowa County for 13 years. I, and many other Sheriffs throughout the state, have worked on this issue every year and Senator Marklein got the job done. Thank you Senator Marklein, I and the citizens of Iowa County appreciate your hard work."

Juneau County Sheriff Brent Oleson said, “On behalf of the taxpayers of Juneau County, I appreciate Senator Marklein’s hard work to pass this law. We have been working on this bill for a long time and appreciate that there is finally resolution to this issue.”

Sauk County Sheriff Chip Meister said, “Predictability is extremely helpful in our budgeting process. This bill helps our department plan and benefits taxpayers of Sauk County who have had to fill in the financial gaps left by low reimbursements.”

Grant County Sheriff Nate Dreckman said, “This bill benefits the taxpayers of Grant County who have had to make up the difference in the past. I am proud to be a part of this solution and appreciate Senator Marklein’s diligence in solving this issue with us.”

Lafayette County Sheriff Reg Gill said, “Lafayette County taxpayers were given some relief through this bill. We will not have to make up the difference from our county budget anymore and our department will be able to plan more effectively into the future.”

While this law may seem like it has limited impact to most of us, it is a great example of how different parts of government must work together to make changes, modernize and achieve positive results.

All too often, we see headlines that demonstrate disconnect between the Federal government and the state government; the local city council and a state agency; a school board and the legislature. But more often than not, the most successful legislation brings all of the stakeholders and responsible parties to the table to discuss, winnow and debate the merits of changes we propose to make.

The best bills come from strong discussion, thorough deliberation, mutual goals and collaboration. Act 164 is a good example of these things and was passed by a nearly unanimous, bi-partisan vote of the legislature. I appreciate all of the hard work done by our local Sheriffs and am honored to work with them to change this law.

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to [Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov). Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have input, ideas or need assistance with any state-related matters.