



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Dianne Hesselbein

79TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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HELSELBEIN PUSHES FOR SAFETY AT STATE PRISONS

Rep. Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton) today announced an initiative to bring safe working and living conditions back to the state's adult and juvenile prisons.

Hesselbein's bill will restore prison guards' right to negotiate workplace safety through collective bargaining. Fire and police unions retained that right in Act 10, but not correctional officers. Sen. Jennifer Schilling (D-La Crosse) will introduce the Senate companion bill.

"Without contracts, the Department of Corrections has made a moving target out of policies relating to consecutive days of overtime," Hesselbein said. "Balancing the staffing shortages on the backs of officers and eliminating seniority as a factor as to who works these shifts has cost us a huge number of experienced guards."

The bill is one of a series being advanced by legislative Democrats to address a growing problem that has not been adequately managed by the Department of Corrections. Shilling said:

"In the past two months, serious assaults and nearly-fatal suicide attempts have shocked families and communities who had been told not to worry about safety concerns in our correctional facilities. Wisconsin children, families, and public safety officers can't afford to continue waiting for action."

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