



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2020

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**Wisconsin Assembly Democrats: Criminal Justice Reform  
Democratic Weekly Radio Address  
By Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee)**

[Audio File of Radio Address](#)

Hello, this is Representative Evan Goyke with this week's Democratic radio address

Criminal justice reform has become a national, bi-partisan issue, with both federal and state-led initiatives.

To date, 45 states have engaged in some degree of justice reform to address rising prison populations and to avoid the massive costs of constructing new prison facilities, while also maintaining public safety. At the federal level, the bipartisan First Step Act was signed into law last year in an effort to reduce the number of people in our nation's prisons and help former inmates rejoin society.

Wisconsin is, unfortunately, an outlier due to our continued Republican inaction to address these major issues facing our criminal justice system. Democrats are ready to take action. Last week, with the support of Governor Evers, I introduced a package of bills aimed at reforming our justice system, built from the experiences of other states, to safely reduce the prison population and reinvest the savings to reduce crime. The fact of the matter is our prison system is at a breaking point. Wisconsin faces the reality of needing to build a new prison unless reforms are made.

Even conservative groups like Americans for Prosperity and Right on Crime understand the importance of reforming our criminal justice system. It is disappointing that Wisconsin Republicans rolled out proposals this week that would take our state in the opposite direction of the rest of the nation. These Republican bills, under the banner of "tough on crime" would make our prison problem exponentially worse. This legislative package flies in the face of a mounting body of research that shows we should be investing in our communities rather than finding ways to increase penalties and incarcerate more people.

The fact is, crime is best reduced when the community is brought together. In Milwaukee, homicides are down for the second year in a row. Led by the Office of Violence Prevention, the city of Milwaukee is moving in the right direction. This was done at a fraction of the cost and without increased penalties or new prison spending.

Criminal justice reform can and should be a statewide, bipartisan effort. Wisconsin Democrats will continue pursuing thoughtful, proven reforms moving forward.

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