

Remarks of Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen

Press Conference with District Attorney Brad Schimel, Sheriff Daniel Trawicki, Local, Regional and Statewide Law Enforcement Representatives and Concerned Leaders

Regarding Governor Doyle's Proposed Budget Law Enforcement Priorities and Public Safety Impacts

Waukesha County Courthouse Boardroom

Waukesha, Wisconsin

Monday March 16, 2009

9:30 AM

Good Morning.

This week the Wisconsin Legislature begins its work on Governor Doyle's proposed state budget. As the discussion begins there, and I will testify before the Joint Finance Committee tomorrow, it is an appropriate time to highlight law enforcement concerns with the budget proposal with the sincere hope the Legislature will remedy the proposed budget's failures and adequately protect public safety.

I am deeply concerned about this proposed budget's impact on public safety and law enforcement's ability to keep up. These concerns quickly translate into concerns for new crime victims -- and those victims already impacted by those now soon to be let free ahead of their release dates.

Fighting crime and a duty to Wisconsin's crime victims is in my job description. And, it's in the hearts and minds of the prosecutors and law enforcement officials standing next to me today.

Public safety is the first priority of any government. People expect to be safe in their homes, at their schools, and on their streets. And, if government can not keep them safe it can not hope to succeed in anything else it does.

That is why I was encouraged when Governor Doyle began his budget address by stating that the budget must first protect what's important to Wisconsin -- and he included public safety in that list.

Unfortunately, the Governor's proposed budget fails to protect law enforcement's existing ability to protect public safety -- clearly... and frankly -- it takes dramatic steps backward.

For example:

It calls for

- Early release of felons from prison

It calls for

- Early termination for felons on extended supervision (or parole)

It calls for

- Elimination of probation for some misdemeanants

It calls for

- Reducing GPS monitoring of sex offenders

It calls for

- Expanding opportunities for criminals to expunge (or erase) their criminal records
- It calls for
- CUTS to District Attorney’s budgets by 6.5% (and this is a conservative number when many other factors are considered) while increasing all government spending by almost 8% in the first biennium.
- It calls for
- CUTS to shared revenues by 1% across-the-board impacting local law enforcement and fire protection
- It calls for
- Elimination of the front license plate
- It calls for
- Adding chargebacks of costs to local law enforcement for some crime scene investigation services
- It calls for
- CUTS to law enforcement training statewide and locally
- It calls for
- CUTS to drug enforcement including Special Agent resources
- It calls for
- CUTS to the Department of Justice and leaves additional impending lapse and efficiency cuts to be set by the Department of Administration and unilaterally taken away without the benefit of planning, discussion, or legislative oversight
- It...
- Imposes a new traffic-stop record keeping responsibility – an unwelcome and unfunded mandate – on every local law enforcement agency and the Department of Justice who the proposal envisions will receive and collate this data
- It...
- INCREASES the Handgun Hotline fee by more than double my requested adjustment of \$13 (which is the transaction cost) to \$30 per check with the extra money this generates going to pay for what had been paid for by those who violate the law.

Today we ask the Legislature to protect law enforcement and ensure public safety. We ask them to repair these flawed proposals and make public safety their first priority as it is ours.

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