



March 13, 2018

To: Governor Scott Walker and Members of the Wisconsin Legislature

From: Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association

RE: Improving School Safety Proposals

The devastating shootings in our schools by troubled youth is the new reality. The thousands of men and women in the law enforcement community across our state, see day to day, how violence and crime increase due to a lack of services for those in need of urgent mental health services and easy access to guns. We also recognize that many of our schools do not have the proper safety measures in place to deal with a crisis like a school shooting. The Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association representing law enforcement leaders in 700 communities across our state, urge careful consideration of policies that the Wisconsin legislature and Governor Walker endorse to make our schools safer.

As law enforcement officials from many different backgrounds of protective service, we would like to suggest that any proposals enacted into law, come with the appropriate funding to ensure their effectiveness, if Wisconsin wants to be serious about preventing a school tragedy from happening here.

Below are our comments and recommendations.

- **Violence in schools *cannot* be solved with arming teachers.** It takes hundreds of hours to properly train a police officer, including the use of force procedures and when lethal force is appropriate to use. Teachers are focused on their classrooms and not possible threats that are coming down the hallway. Asking them to take on the weighty demands of using lethal force against an active shooter is not appropriate. This is not their field of expertise and we believe more harm than good would come of this.
- **Sufficient funds should be allocated to increase the number of school resource officers who are fully trained law enforcement officers and not merely armed security guards, who do not come close to law enforcement training standards.** The ability to use lethal force in a school, should only be given to highly trained law enforcement officers. Law enforcement should not be forced to operate under existing revenue caps when the public is clamoring for more safety for their children. Relief from the revenue caps for public safety expenditures, so those communities that need to hire more law enforcement officers to address local community issues, can do so.
- **Sufficient funds should be allocated for school security improvements.** Improvements needed include: a single secure access point, securely locked exits throughout the school, security cameras which law enforcement can view in real time, metal detectors, school resource officers, and alarm systems on emergency exits and all classroom doors. Many schools are old and outdated. School districts should be allowed to exceed state-imposed revenue limits for security related expenditures.
- **Sufficient funds should be allocated for mental health services for teachers, students, and kids who need help.** While policymakers have spent sufficient time studying the broken mental health service delivery system, there has been no comprehensive and sustainable effort to address the insufficient funding for the crushing demands of those in need of mental health services. Provide funds for training, including trauma informed care for teachers, guidance counselors, and school coaches so they can recognize potentially violent behavior from students. Currently, there is “no one” responsible for follow-up with troubled individuals. Additional educational resources for expelled students should be considered. The current system is underfunded, and operations are independent of one another, which is why critical communication is intermittent, uncoordinated, and sporadic.

These additional mental health dollars should also cover a law enforcement officer who suffers from PTSD as a result of his or her involvement in dealing with a school shooting. Mirror language just passed by Florida.

- **Increase funding for more anti-bullying programs in our schools** so those students who see the use of a gun as a method to take out their frustration learn better coping skills and maintain school environments that are compassionate about differences.
- **Provide authority and additional funding for the Department of Justice (DOJ) to develop rules to help schools implement school safety plans** that include guidelines that specify procedures for emergency prevention and mitigation. An annual report shall be submitted and approved to DOJ at least once a year after the plan goes into effect.
- **Require Schools to submit their building blue print plans to local law enforcement agencies to be used as a tactical tool, if ever needed.**
- **Provide sufficient funding for school crisis teams to evaluate threats in schools before they become actual threats.**
- **Require Universal Background Checks for all gun purchases.**
- **Mandate mental health background checks for anyone under the age of 21 to assess whether someone is having mental health difficulties and should not be allowed to purchase a hand gun.** Add Florida language signed into law last week that bans people deemed “mentally defective” or who have been committed to a mental institution from owning or possessing firearms until a court grants relief.
- **Create a lethal violence protective order (LVPO) process in Wisconsin that mirrors existing temporary restraining order (TRO) and injunction processes through our courts, just as Florida just passed last week.** This will create a process for family members and law enforcement to petition a court to have someone’s guns taken away if that person poses a lethal threat to themselves or others. (Five states have such laws and Republican Florida Gov. Rick Scott has endorsed a similar plan.) This would be a petition to the court to temporarily prevent the person from possessing a firearm in effect for 180 days and could be extended if the court believes the individual continues to be a threat to themselves or others. Also allow a law enforcement officer to temporarily seize firearms from someone they have already taken into custody for an involuntary mental health assessment.
- **Reinstate a 48-hour waiting period for gun purchases that was repealed in 2015 or extend to 72 hours or three days, just like Florida law that passed last week.**

Thank you for your consideration.

For more information please contact:

2018 WI Chiefs of Police President: Police Chief Peter Nimmer (Shorewood) 414 847-2616

2018 WI Chiefs of Police Legislative Co chair: Police Chief Greg Leck (Stoughton) 608 873-4057

2018 WI Chiefs of Police Legislative Co Chair: Police Chief Bernie Coughlin (Verona) 608 845-7623