



JIM STEINEKE

ASST. MAJORITY LEADER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 5th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-2418
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0005
Rep.Steineke@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

**Thursday, January 23 | 10:00 AM | 300 Northeast
Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice**

**Rep. Jim Steineke Testimony on Assembly Bill 634:
Statute of limitations for arson crimes and the definition of a Molotov cocktail.**

Good morning Chairman Kleefisch and members of the Committee.

Assembly Bill 634 is a common-sense update to our laws that is long overdue. This legislation modernizes the definition of a Molotov cocktail and increases the statute of limitations on arson crimes from 6 to 15 years.

Under current law, to be prosecuted for using a “fire bomb,” or “Molotov cocktail,” the container must be breakable. Criminals have begun using plastic bottles, rather than glass, and there is concern that the current definition would not include these bottles.

Additionally, law enforcement has requested an increase in the statute of limitations on arson. Methods of arson have become more sophisticated and require more investigation time.

As investigative techniques are perfected, increasing the statute of limitations will allow law enforcement to link more crimes together over a period of time that they have been unable to in the past.

Under current law, a prosecution for the felony crime of arson must be commenced within six years of the violation. This bill changes that time limit to 15 years for arson of buildings, arson of property other than a building, and arson with the intent to defraud.

This bill first applies the change to these arson offenses that, as of the effective date of this bill, have not been barred from prosecution under the six-year statute of limitation.

Thank you for your time and I’d be happy to take any questions.