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## **Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 835** *Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage* January 12, 2022

Members of the committee, thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill (AB) 835. I'm proud to bring forth legislation that supports our law enforcement throughout the state.

Today, Wisconsin has the lowest number of law enforcement officers working in at least a decade. Resignations are up; applications are down. If we care about our communities and our constituents who live there, something needs to be done and it needs to be done now.

Law enforcement officers are often hated and even vilified on a daily basis, simply for the job they do. The environment that has been created surrounding law enforcement has contributed to this recruitment and retention issue; an issue which affects both small and large, rural and urban departments.

AB 835 works to combat this issue by instead recognizing officers for the hard work they do. Our proposal acts as a recruitment and retention tool for police departments by waiving license fees for deer hunting and fishing for law enforcement officers. It also creates a fee-free camping weekend in state parks for officers over Memorial Day weekend. Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) would be used to make up the lost revenue resulting from this fee waiver.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify in support of AB 835. I hope to see your support on this important legislation that is just a small way for us to say 'thank you' to our law enforcement officers who keep all of us safe.