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November 30th, 2023

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 620

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety for hearing public testimony on Assembly Bill 620 which doubles the training reimbursement rates for Wisconsin law enforcement officers.

Our police undergo extensive training to ensure they are adequately ready to protect themselves and the citizens they serve. Although this training is broad, annual training requirements are mandated by Wisconsin statute to ensure our law enforcement are constantly learning and improving. These 24 hours of annual training are vital to continued education, but come at a high financial cost.

There is no doubt that we all feel the strain of the rising cost of living as everything is more expensive. The same goes for our law enforcement. Currently, the Department of Justice (DOJ) reimburses departments \$160 per law enforcement officer. In contrast, training costs for officers can range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 annually. This legislation seeks to double that reimbursement rate from \$160 to \$320 therefore easing some of the financial burden on our law enforcement departments. The biennial budget provided a secure funding source for these payments and this legislation seeks to utilize them.

Additionally, a clarification in state statute language will ensure that our law enforcement departments receive these payments directly. This prevents municipalities from withholding funds that should be given to the departments themselves.

An amendment was submitted, in collaboration with the DOJ, which offered only technical changes and did not alter the intent of the bill. As originally drafted, the bill did not account for the funding increases provided by the biennial budget which does not occur until the second year of the biennium. The amendment simply adds a delayed effective date of training received on or after July 1, 2024 to ensure the DOJ has the additional funds to send out these increased payments.

Wisconsin's law enforcement groups understand the importance of this change and have fully supported this proposal. This simple bill allows our departments to continue the good work to keeping officers trained and qualified for the most difficult situations. Rising prices affect not only our wallets, but our local governments and public safety departments. Committee members, please join me in supporting this common sense piece of legislation – Assembly Bill 620. I would be happy to respond to any questions or concerns about the legislation.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert B. Donovan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Bob Donovan
State Representative – 84th Assembly District



ROB STAFSHOLT

STATE SENATOR • 10th SENATE DISTRICT

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DATE: November 30, 2023

RE: Testimony on Assembly Bill 620

TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

FROM: Senator Rob Stafsholt

Thank you Chairman Spiros and committee members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety for hearing Assembly Bill 620.

Under current law, officer recruits for law enforcement agencies, jails, or juvenile detention facilities are mandated to have 24 hours of recertification training per year, which can range between \$1,000 and \$3,000. After this training is completed, the Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) authorizes reimbursement by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to be issued to local governments. The local governments then in turn issues this to their law enforcement agencies after the training is completed.

The most recent state budget provided a secure funding source for these payments and enough resources to cover a doubling of the rate from the current minimum amount of \$160 to \$320 per officer. This bill matches that commitment from the budget in state law, ensuring our local departments receive at least \$320 per officer going forward. The bill also makes sure these funds are sent directly to the law enforcement agencies, instead of through a local government middle-man.

Today, our local officers are in need of updated training to match the growing demands for safe communities. This bill significantly helps this by ensuring we have the best trained and most qualified law enforcement officers.

We have also authored a simple amendment, which matches the date that departments are able to receive these funds to when the funds are available.

Again, thank you Chairman Spiros and committee members for allowing me to submit testimony on AB 620. I would also like to thank Representative Donovan for his work on this legislation. I would appreciate your support on this bill.



November 30, 2023

To: Chairman Spiros and Members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

From: Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association

Re: Support Assembly Bill 620, Training expenses for officers

Chairman Spiros, thank you for your willingness to hold a hearing on this legislation. We would also like to thank Representative Donovan and Senator Stafsholt for authoring this legislation.

Additionally, we would like to thank committee members Representatives Schutt, Green, Novak, and Wichgers for their support in cosponsoring this incredibly important piece of legislation.

For background, Wisconsin currently mandates 24 hours of training per year for every officer. Training costs can range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 per officer. The Wisconsin Department of Justice reimburses a portion of these expenses, but it is not sufficient to support the academy and recertification costs our departments are mandated to provide. To put it more simply, every time a police department sends an officer for training, the department actually loses money to have that officer better trained.

Assembly Bill 620 increases this reimbursement amount for training from \$160 to \$320. The biennial state budget, 2023 Wisconsin Act 19, provided a secure funding source and enough resources to cover the increased payments. With passage of this proposal, the training fund increase will be cemented in state statute ensuring that all departments benefit from the increase, both now and into the future.

Prior to passage of the recently enacted shared revenue overhaul, the reimbursements were funded from the Penalty Surcharge Account. For many years, this account has been operating in deficit. This increasing structural deficit grew from \$1.4 million in 2008 to \$23 million in 2022. Now, the training fund reimbursements will be funded using general-purpose revenue.

In recent years there has been a growing focus on the amount and type of training law enforcement officials receive. Adequate and timely training for officers increases public safety for all. This legislation further assists departments, so they have adequate resources



to train and staff the best individuals with a wide variety of skills to keep our communities safe.

An increased reimbursement for officer training funds has been the top priority for the WCPA and other law enforcement support organizations because we recognize the value of a well-trained force. That is why the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association joined the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association, Badger State Sheriffs Association, and the Fraternal Order of Police in supporting this critically needed piece of legislation.

This legislation has broad bipartisan support with nearly half of the Legislature as sponsors of the proposal, and we hope this committee passes this legislation as well.

Thank you again for your attention to this matter and I would be happy to take questions at this time.



Wisconsin State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police



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Vice President

Shane Wrucke
Secretary

Tim Toth
Treasurer

Randy Winkler
Second Vice President

Sean Marschke
Sergeant at Arms

Don Kapla
Immediate Past President

Jerry Johnson
National Trustee

November 30, 2023

Wisconsin Fraternal Order of Police Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 620

Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Thank you, Representative Sprios and fellow committee members for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Assembly Bill 620. My name is Ryan Windorff, and I am the President of the Wisconsin State Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police. The Fraternal Order of Police is the world's largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers, with more than 367,000 members in more than 2,200 lodges. The Wisconsin State Lodge proudly represents more than 3,000 members in 27 lodges throughout the state. We are the voice off those who dedicate their lives to protecting and serving our communities. We are committed to improving the working conditions of law enforcement officers and the safety of those we serve through education, legislation, information, community involvement and employee representation.

Law enforcement work is diverse and complex, and officers need a range of skills in order to perform their duties effectively. In Wisconsin, the training requirements for law enforcement officers are established by the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Training and Standards Bureau. To become a certified law enforcement officer in Wisconsin, individuals must complete a minimum of 720 hours of basic training at an approved law enforcement academy. The basic training curriculum covers a range of topics, including criminal law, search and seizure, firearms and defensive tactics, and crisis intervention. In addition, officers must also complete training in ethics and cultural diversity, as well as specialized training in areas such as emergency vehicle operations and responding to domestic violence incidents.

Once officers have completed their basic training, they are required to complete ongoing training and professional development throughout their careers. Wisconsin law enforcement officers must complete at least 24 hours of continuing education every two years, which can include training in areas such as use of force, community policing, and mental health crisis intervention.

It is important to note that individual law enforcement agencies may have additional training requirements beyond those established by the Wisconsin Department of Justice. It is also possible for officers to pursue additional training and certifications in specialized areas, such as forensic investigation or K-9 handling.

In recent years, the cost of law enforcement training has been on the rise. There are several reasons why law enforcement training is becoming more expensive. One reason is the increasing complexity of the job. Law enforcement officers are required to be highly trained in a range of areas, from firearms and defensive tactics to communication and problem-solving skills. With the rise of new technologies and the changing nature of crime,



Wisconsin State Lodge *Fraternal Order of Police*



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law enforcement agencies are constantly updating their training programs to ensure that officers have the skills and knowledge they need to do their jobs effectively.

Another reason for the increasing cost of law enforcement training is the need for specialized training. For example, officers may need to be trained in responding to active shooter situations, handling hazardous materials, or working with special populations such as individuals with mental illness or developmental disabilities. These specialized training programs can be expensive to develop and deliver.

In addition, the cost of equipment and materials used in training is also a factor in the rising cost of law enforcement training. For example, firearms, ammunition, and protective gear can be expensive, and agencies must also invest in training facilities and simulators to provide realistic training scenarios.

Assembly Bill 620 proposes changes to the current law that requires officer recruits for law enforcement agencies, jails, or juvenile detention facilities to complete preparatory training and for law enforcement officers to complete annual recertification training. The proposed changes require the Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) to pay the law enforcement agency for the approved preparatory expenses, and increase the minimum amount per officer for annual recertification training from \$160 to \$320.

This bill will provide more financial support to law enforcement agencies for the training of their officers, which will ultimately lead to better-trained officers and safer communities. With the increased minimum amount for annual recertification training, officers will have access to more comprehensive and advanced training, making them better equipped to handle the challenges they face on a daily basis. Furthermore, by requiring LESB to pay for the approved preparatory expenses, this bill will reduce the financial burden on law enforcement agencies, allowing them to allocate resources to other areas.

The training requirements for law enforcement officers in Wisconsin are designed to ensure that officers have the knowledge and skills they need to serve and protect their communities effectively while upholding the highest standards of professionalism and ethics. Passing this bill will show a commitment to the safety and well-being of our communities. It is important to support our law enforcement officers by providing them with the necessary resources to perform their duties effectively and stay safe.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



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TO: Chairman Spiros and Members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety and Chairman Wanggaard of the State Senate Committee on Justice and Public Safety

FROM: Chief Edith Hudson, Marquette University Police Department

DATE: November 30, 2023

RE: Assembly Bill 620/Senate Bill 573- Relating to training expenses for officers

On behalf of the Marquette University Police Department (MUPD), we are grateful to Representative Donovan and Senator Stafsholt for introducing Assembly Bill 620 and Senate Bill 573 related to training expenses for officers. Current law requires officer recruits for law enforcement agencies, jails, or juvenile detention facilities to complete preparatory training and for law enforcement officers to complete annual recertification training; the Marquette University Police Department is also required to complete the annual recertification process.

Under current law, the Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) authorizes the reimbursement to political subdivisions of approved expenses. This bill requires LESB to pay the law enforcement agency for the approved preparatory expenses. Under current law, the approved expenses for annual recertification training must include at least \$160 per law enforcement officer. Assembly Bill 620 and Senate Bill 573 increases the minimum amount per officer to \$320 and specifies that the law enforcement agency that employs the officer be paid for the approved expenses of the officer's annual recertification training, and as amended, applies after July 1, 2024. MUPD supports this legislation, including Assembly Amendment 1 offered by Representative Donovan.

We are grateful to the Wisconsin Legislature and the State of Wisconsin for the statutory authority for the creation of the Marquette University Police Department under Wisconsin State Statutes 175.42. Under current law, and as written, Senate Bill 573, only allows law enforcement agencies to receive grant funding. The Marquette University Police Department is included in the definition of a "law enforcement agency" as outlined in Wisconsin State Statute 165.83(2)(bv). In operating and maintaining its own police department, Marquette University continues to provide a valuable safety and security asset to the city of Milwaukee, as 90% of the MUPD patrol zone is public right-of-way.

The Marquette University Police Department (MUPD) was commissioned on May 1, 2015, after an agreement with the state of Wisconsin's Department of Justice and Attorney General's office. MUPD has more than 60 trained public safety professionals, including 48 sworn law enforcement officers. They work to deliver an extensive safety infrastructure throughout campus and in the near off-campus neighborhood. MUPD has an extensive safety infrastructure throughout campus and in the near-off-campus neighborhood, which includes more than 1,200 cameras and more than 450 Blue Light phones, a state-of-the-art command information center and the nationally recognized Department of Campus Safety.



A Marquette University police officer's primary role is to prevent crime and the breach of public order which include protecting students, faculty, staff, campus visitors, property and facilities from accidents, bodily harm, fire, theft, vandalism and illegal entry; enforcing laws and traffic and parking regulations; apprehending violators; providing general information and

assistance to the public; conducting criminal investigations; and participating in community-oriented policing efforts. The MUPD patrol zone extends beyond Marquette University's campus and much of its work benefits community members who are not affiliated with Marquette University. Implemented in January of 2023, as a result of President Michael R. Lovell's Safety Task Force, MUPD has a new dedicated unit to address mental health crises. MUPD's Behavioral Health Unit is a partnership between law enforcement and a civilian crisis worker, which allows police to work with those in need of services who have, or could have, repeated contact with police. MUPD's Behavioral Health Unit provides an opportunity for police to look to resources other than the criminal justice system when mental health concerns arise.

MUPD also works in close partnership with other law enforcement agencies to protect the residents of Milwaukee and the citizens of Wisconsin.

Again, thank you for your support of Assembly Bill 620 and Senate Bill 573. I would be happy to discuss this matter if you have any further questions. Please feel free to contact me at (414) 288-6800.

