



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Brent Jacobson

87TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 179

Assembly Committee on Transportation

July 21st 2025

Thank you, Chairwoman VanderMeer and fellow committee members, for receiving my testimony on Assembly Bill 179. This legislation makes a minor adjustment to our state statutes in order keep up with changes to lighting on modern police cars.

The coloration and placement of lights on emergency vehicles is set out in state statute. If you have ever watched a police or sheriff vehicle with its lights and sirens activated, you might have noticed that the light bar on top of the vehicle is red on the driver side, and blue on the passenger side. This standard configuration is actually established within state law.

While all police vehicles in Wisconsin have this configuration for their main lights, it is not uncommon for modern police cars to have additional lights mounted as trimming along the sides or in the front or rear to improve visibility. In many cases, these configurations are made by the manufacturer. Unfortunately, this has resulted in some police vehicles being equipped with side or trimming lights that violate state statute. AB 179 updates our laws concerning police light placement to reflect how modern police vehicles may have more than just a top mounted light bar.

AB 159 clarifies that marked police vehicles equipped with a light bar, lights on the roof, or interior lights must be red on the driver side and blue on the passenger side. This bill also adds language allowing for additional blue or red lights to be mounted on the front, rear, or sides of a vehicle in any configuration. This bill does not change the requirement for a police vehicle's primary lights. It simply allows police and sheriffs departments who have acquired vehicles with trim lights that do not fall under state statute to continue to be used without expensive replacement or modifications.

Thank you once again for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask for your support of this simple bill, and can take any questions at this time.



July 22, 2025

To: Chairman Vander Meer and Members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation

From: Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association

Re: Support Assembly Bill 179 – Lighting requirements on police vehicles

Chairman Vander Meer, thank you for your willingness to hold a hearing on this legislation. We would also like to thank the authors, Representative Jacobson and Senator Wanggaard, for introducing this bill.

We ask for your support of Assembly Bill 179.

Current law requires the rooftop and interior red and blue lights on a police vehicle to be displayed in a specific manner. Specifically, red lights must be on the driver's side, and blue must be on the passenger side.

This bill provides flexibility to law enforcement when placing exterior signal lights on marked police vehicles.

In situations when squads are positioned at angles in intersections during law enforcement operations, the current statutory language may result in only red or only blue lights being visible to passing motorists. This can create confusion and reduce visibility.

The proposed statutory change would allow agencies to configure squad lighting in a way that ensures both red and blue lights are always visible, regardless of the vehicle's orientation, thereby enhancing safety and clarity for both officers and the public.

Over the recent past, there has been an increase in officers being struck by vehicles while outside of their patrol vehicles. We believe that this is a common-sense change that will improve the visibility of law enforcement vehicles on the road, thereby enhancing the safety of both officers and drivers.

The Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association supports this legislation and requests that the committee advance it to a committee vote.



To: Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
From: Badger State Sheriffs' Association
Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association
Date: July 21, 2025
RE: Support Testimony on Assembly Bill 179

BSSA and WS&DSA submit in support of AB 179, which provides an important update to Wisconsin's requirements for police vehicle lighting.

As law enforcement tools and technologies continue to evolve, so too must our statutes adapt to reflect practical and modern needs in the field. Currently, Wisconsin law mandates that marked police vehicles be equipped with flashing, oscillating, or rotating red and blue lights, with specific placement—red on the driver's side and blue on the passenger side. However, this framework does not fully account for the diversity of lighting configurations used by law enforcement agencies today.

Assembly Bill 179 updates this statute by offering necessary flexibility while preserving safety and clarity. Specifically, the bill ensures that for vehicles with rooftop or interior light bars, the traditional red/driver side and blue/passenger side positioning is maintained. It also allows for additional red and blue lights to be mounted on other parts of the vehicle—such as the front, sides, or rear—provided the standard roof or interior lights are in place. This flexibility supports both officer safety and vehicle visibility in a variety of operational environments.

We'd like to thank the authors, Sen. Wanggaard and Rep. B. Jacobson for authoring this legislation and the Department of Justice's Law Enforcement Services for their assistance in crafting this legislation.



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To: Assembly Committee on Transportation
From: Toni Herkert, Government Affairs Director, and Evan Miller, Government Affairs Specialist
League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Date: July 22, 2025
RE: Assembly Bill 179 - Police Vehicle Lighting

Chairwoman VanderMeer, Vice-Chair Spiros, and Committee Members,

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization that advocates for the interests of our over 600 member cities and villages, large and small, urban and rural, throughout the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of 2025 Assembly Bill 179. When law enforcement officers take their oath, they're not only agreeing to protect and serve our communities, but they're accepting a career that could put their safety at risk. While the risks they encounter cannot be fully avoided, they can be minimized. Nationally, from 2007 to 2016, more than 1,500 law enforcement officers died in the line of duty, with 39% of deaths resulting from traffic incidents. Additionally, 20% to 30% of non-fatal injuries to officers happen in traffic incidents. Some of these incidents can be avoided.

The League has engaged in efforts in recent years that promote roadside safety for municipal employees. This includes supporting 2021 Wisconsin Act 255, legislation that authorized highway vehicles, such as snowplows and road patching crew vehicles, to utilize green flashing lights along with the traditional amber lights. Municipalities, counties, and state crews have begun voluntarily installing these lights to improve their visibility to drivers. The League's efforts also include our partnership with other stakeholders in work zone safety. As a result of advocacy from this coalition, \$600,000 was provided in the 2025-2027 State Budget for a Work Zone Safety Pilot Program at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation which will examine enhanced highway work zone safety measures.

Assembly Bill 179 builds on these past legislative initiatives supported by the League to reduce traffic-related incidents for municipal employees by proposing flexibility in the currently rigid statutes on allowable police vehicle lighting to improve officer safety. Specifically, the bill allows for additional red and blue lights to be mounted on other parts of the vehicle if the basic configurations for roof and interior lighting listed in the statutes are met. Better lighting on police vehicles will increase visibility to other drivers and allow for earlier recognition by those drivers, especially at night or in poor weather conditions.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation and the League's comments on Assembly Bill 179. If you have any questions, you can contact Toni Herkert at therkert@lwm-info.org or Evan Miller at emiller@lwm-info.org.



Wisconsin State Lodge *Fraternal Order of Police*



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National Trustee

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 179 Assembly Committee on Transportation

July 22, 2025

Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation,

The Wisconsin Fraternal Order of Police is proud to offer our strong support for Assembly Bill 179, which amends section 347.25 (1m) (b) of the Wisconsin Statutes to enhance the requirements for lighting on police vehicles. This bill represents a meaningful step toward improving the safety and visibility of law enforcement vehicles, benefiting both our officers and the communities we serve.

Assembly Bill 179 establishes clear and practical standards for the placement and use of blue and red lights on marked police vehicles. Specifically, it mandates that on vehicles equipped with an exterior light bar, blue lights be mounted on the roof of the passenger side and red lights on the roof of the driver side. For lights mounted inside the vehicle, the bill requires blue lights to be displayed on the interior of the passenger side and red lights on the interior of the driver side. Additionally, the bill permits the use of a combination of blue and red lights on the front, sides, or rear of marked police vehicles, provided the primary roof or interior lighting requirements are met.

These provisions are critical for several reasons:

1. **Enhanced Visibility and Public Safety:** The standardized placement of blue and red lights ensures that police vehicles are easily identifiable, even from a distance of 500 feet, during both daylight and nighttime conditions. This clarity is essential for alerting motorists and pedestrians to the presence of law enforcement, reducing the risk of collisions and enhancing safety during emergency responses, pursuits, or hazardous roadside situations.
2. **Officer Safety:** Clear and consistent lighting configurations allow officers to operate with confidence, knowing their vehicles are readily recognizable as law enforcement. This is particularly important in high-stress situations, such as emergency calls or pursuits, where visibility can prevent misunderstandings and protect officers from harm.
3. **Flexibility for Modern Policing Needs:** By allowing additional blue and red lights on the front, sides, or rear of vehicles, Assembly Bill 179 provides law enforcement agencies with the flexibility to adapt to modern vehicle designs and operational needs while maintaining compliance with the core visibility requirements. This balance ensures that agencies can equip their fleets effectively without compromising safety or clarity.



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The Wisconsin FOP believes that Assembly Bill 179 strikes an appropriate balance between standardization and adaptability. It reinforces the importance of clear, visible, and consistent lighting on police vehicles while allowing for practical implementation across diverse vehicle types and configurations. These updates align with our commitment to ensuring the safety of our officers and the public while maintaining the professionalism and effectiveness of law enforcement operations.

We respectfully urge the Assembly Committee on Transportation to advance Assembly Bill 179 and send it to the full Assembly for consideration. The Wisconsin Fraternal Order of Police stands ready to work with legislators, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders to ensure its successful implementation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Windorff
President

The Fraternal Order of Police is the world's largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers, with over 379,000 members in more than 2,200 lodges. The Wisconsin State Lodge proudly represents more than 3,600 members in 33 lodges throughout the state. We are the voice of 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.