



ROB HUTTON

STATE SENATOR | 5th DISTRICT

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April 1, 2025

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

FR: Sen. Rob Hutton

RE: Senate Bill 93: recommendation to revoke extended supervision, parole, or probation if a person is charged with a crime.

Thank you, Chairman Wanggaard and committee members, for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 93. This legislation is part of a package of bills addressing the revolving door of crime and the cycle of lawlessness that a too-often lenient justice system perpetuates.

Far too often, law abiding citizens become victims of crimes committed by repeat offenders who have been let out on parole, probation or extended supervision and who are wantonly violating the terms of that release.

When a prisoner is granted release before the completion of their sentence, it comes with an expectation of good behavior. An individual who has been charged with a new crime while on release has violated their promise of good behavior and should have their release revoked. However, under current law, this is frequently not the case.

Under this legislation, the Department of Corrections would be required to recommend revoking extended supervision, parole, or probation for someone who has been charged with a new crime while on release.

This legislation is based on a bill from last session. In its fiscal estimate for that bill, the Department of Corrections reported that in FY 2019 there were 6,280 criminals released on community supervision that were charged with a new crime and remained on community supervision, according to information from CCAP.

While I am in favor of giving an offender who sincerely wants to reform their behavior a second chance, we cannot give those who have repeatedly broken our laws and flouted the legal system the opportunity to put our communities at risk if they demonstrate an unwillingness to reform.

This legislation will provide prosecutors and our judicial system with another tool to keep dangerous individuals with a demonstrated lack of interest in reform off our streets, which should be a goal of all legislators.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration of this bill. I respectfully ask for your support.



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Brent Jacobson

87TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 93

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

April 1st 2025

Thank you, Chairman Wanggaard and committee members, for hearing testimony on Senate Bill 93, which promotes public safety and accountability in our criminal justice system by requiring the Department of Corrections to recommend revoking extended supervision, probation, or parole for an individual charged with a new crime while on release.

It may come as a surprise, but a convicted criminal on community supervision is not immediately revoked if they are charged with another crime. Under current statute, whether such individuals are reincarcerated or allowed to remain on our streets is decided by an administrative law judge. However, in order for a judge to hear a revocation case, revocation must first be recommended by an agent of the Department of Corrections. According to the DOC's own estimates, in 2019 there were 6,280 individuals on community supervision who were charged with a new crime, but not revoked.

SB 93 addresses that discrepancy by requiring DOC to recommend revoking community supervision when an individual on probation, parole, or extended supervision is charged with a new crime. I want to emphasize that SB 93 would not mandate revoking an individual on probation, parole, or extended supervision. This legislation simply ensures that when a convicted criminal is charged with another crime, their case is heard in court. As homicide and violent crime in Wisconsin trend upward, especially in our major cities, we cannot allow dangerous individuals to remain on our streets.

I am all for giving convicted criminals the chance to reintegrate into our communities. However, it is unacceptable to give repeat criminals the opportunity to continue to put our families and neighbors at risk again and again without facing consequences. As state representatives, we owe it to our constituents to keep them from being victimized by repeat offenders already on their second, or even third or fourth chance, or more.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



April 1, 2025

To: Chairman Wanggaard and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

From: Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association

Re: Support Senate Bill 93 Revocation Legislation

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

We urge support for Senate Bill 93.

This bill requires the Department of Corrections to recommend revoking a person's extended supervision, parole, or probation if the person is charged with a crime while on release.

The Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association constantly look at ways to help ensure that our communities are safe. We believe that this is common sense legislation that ensures that action is taken when those who violate supervision are held accountable.

By revoking the parole of someone who commits another crime while out in public, we are making our communities safer.

The Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association supports this legislation and asks that the committee move forward on this legislation.

We would be happy to answer any questions regarding this legislation.



To: Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
From: Badger State Sheriffs' Association
Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association
Date: April 1, 2025
RE: Support Testimony on Senate Bill 93 – Revocation Recommendation

BSSA and WS&DSA submit these comments **in support of the policy intent of SB 93**. Our organizations appreciate and commend the authors' focus on enhancing public safety by protecting victims, holding offenders accountable, and addressing repeat violent offenders. These are goals we strongly support and that align with our mission to keep communities safe.

At the same time, Wisconsin Sheriffs have concerns about the fiscal impact this legislation may have on county jails—both large and small—across the state. While the intent of SB 93 is clear and commendable, the bill's implementation as currently written could place significant and unfunded pressure on local resources.

SB 93 requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to recommend revocation of a person's extended supervision, parole, or probation if that individual is charged with a crime while under supervision. However, Wis. Stat. § 302.33(2)(a)2 prohibits DOC from reimbursing counties for housing individuals with pending criminal charges, even if they are held on a departmental detainer. As a result, this revocation mandate will likely increase the number of individuals in county jails without reimbursement.

DOC estimates that, using prior-year CCAP data and assuming a 47% affirmation rate by administrative law judges, SB 93 could lead to an additional 6,280 cases per year. This translates to thousands more individuals occupying county jail beds, with counties bearing the full cost. Without an accompanying funding mechanism, this bill would effectively impose an unfunded mandate on local governments.

One possible solution would be to amend the statute to allow DOC to reimburse county jails for housing individuals—even those with pending charges—when the incarceration results from a revocation recommendation. Additionally, DOC currently does not reimburse counties for medical costs in these situations, which can be substantial and compound the fiscal strain.

The bill also has implications for the Department of Administration's Division of Hearings and Appeals (DOA/DHA), which is responsible for holding revocation hearings. A significant increase in revocation cases may result in hearing backlogs, extending the amount of time individuals remain in county custody. While current statutes require hearings within 50 days (with an option for a 10-day extension), delays would place additional stress on already limited county jail capacity and budgets.

Moreover, SB 93 would override the more flexible system created under 2013 Wisconsin Act 196, which allows for short-term sanctions for certain violations. That system provides for 90-day placements in regional detention or county facilities, giving DOC discretion based on the severity of the violation. By requiring revocation in all cases where new charges are filed, SB 93 removes that discretion and eliminates a potentially more efficient, cost-effective response in appropriate cases.

In conclusion, while we support the public safety goals of SB 93, we respectfully urge the committee to address the significant fiscal implications of the bill. Wisconsin's county jails must be given the resources necessary to implement this policy successfully. We believe that with thoughtful amendments, the bill can strike the right balance between accountability and sustainability.

April 1, 2025

Chair Wanggaard, Vice-Chair James, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 93.

We cannot continue to double down on harmful policies that have pushed our correctional system to a breaking point and failed to actually improve safety and material conditions in Wisconsin communities. As a reminder, we have over 23,000 people incarcerated in state prisons, about 12,000 in county jails, and over 63,000 people on probation, parole, and extended supervision.

Devastatingly, Wisconsin has the highest Black incarceration rate in the country. Data shows that 1 in 36 Black Wisconsinites are currently incarcerated, meaning Black people are nearly 12 times more likely to be incarcerated than white people.¹ According to a study by the Wisconsin Court System, Native American men are 34% more likely and Black men are 28% more likely to be sentenced to prison than their white counterparts,² Wisconsin also has a higher percentage of people incarcerated for crimes committed as youth than any state in the country except Louisiana.³ We all want to live in safe and healthy communities, and legislation proposing changes to the criminal legal system should be focused on the most effective approaches to achieving that goal. SB-93/AB-85 would take us several enormous steps in the wrong direction.

This bill would require DOC to recommend revoking a person's probation, parole, or extended supervision for just being charged with—and not convicted of—a crime. In Wisconsin, the number of people on extended supervision exceeds the national average, and the typical length of supervision is nearly twice the national average.⁴ As a report from the Badger Institute notes, "There is little evidence that society benefits from such lengthy periods of supervision."⁵

¹ Clare Amari, *Wisconsin imprisons 1 in 36 Black adults. No state has a higher rate.*, Wisconsin Watch (Oct. 13, 2021), <https://wisconsinwatch.org/2021/10/wisconsin-imprisons-1-in-36-black-adults-no-state-has-a-higher-rate/>

² DRAFT: *Race and Prison Sentencing in Wisconsin: Initial Outcomes of Felony Convictions, 2009-2018* (Jan. 2020), https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/20478391/race-prison-sentence-felony-report-draft_2020_02_05.pdf.

³ Alexander Shur, *Wisconsin has 2nd highest percentage of prisoners locked up for crimes committed as youth*, Wisconsin State Journal (May 23, 2023), https://madison.com/news/state-regional/government-politics/wisconsin-has-2nd-highest-percentage-of-prisoners-locked-up-for-crimes-committed-as-youth/article_4a6c1600-f5b7-11ed-9186-ffd641c2443d.html.

⁴ "The Wisconsin Community Corrections Story," Columbia University Justice Lab (January 2019), [https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Wisconsin Community Corrections Story final online copy.pdf](https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Wisconsin%20Community%20Corrections%20Story%20final%20online%20copy.pdf).

⁵ "Ex-Offenders Under Watch," Badger Institute (July 2019), <https://www.badgerinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/RevocationPDF.pdf>.

Revocations are already the primary driver of incarceration in Wisconsin—revocations for rule violations and revocations resulting in new convictions accounted for an extraordinary 60% of the total 8,155 new prison admissions in 2024.⁶

Lowering the Constitutional Burden for Conviction

Taking away discretion from DOC agents and automatically initiating an administrative revocation to send a person to prison for being charged with a crime raises constitutional concerns. If an individual on supervision is charged with a new crime, and as a result of this bill, the new crime is handled as an administrative revocation rather than a new circuit court case, the practical burden of proof required for a period of incarceration on a new charge would essentially become “probable cause” (the standard for issuing the charge itself) rather than “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

The reality is the overwhelming majority of revocation proceedings decided by an administrative law judge result in re-incarceration. While SB-93 would mandate a revocation *recommendation*, in light of the conditions of release and the lower burdens and standards of the administrative revocation process, this functionally means mandatory revocation in most cases.

Based on a study sample from the aforementioned Badger Institute report, 49% of revocation conduct later led to a criminal conviction while 51% did not result in an additional criminal conviction.⁷ SB-93 takes away the current discretion on the 51% of alleged criminal activity that does not result in a criminal conviction, functionally bypassing the due process afforded in a criminal prosecution to instead use an administrative process with far fewer rights.

Over Two Billion Dollar Price Tag

According to the Fiscal Estimate completed by the Department of Corrections, this proposal would cost a fortune:

- **Over \$1.7 million annually** for increased revocation cases adjudicated by the Department of Administration’s Division of Hearings and Appeals;
- **\$2 billion** for the construction of two new prisons to accommodate the significant increase in the incarcerated population;
- **Over \$85.2 million** in increased operations costs during the first year of enactment
- **Over \$245.7 million** in a permanent increased operations costs after the population is annualized during the second year of enactment.

Rather than spending billions in taxpayer dollars to trap people in a revolving door of incarceration and supervision, people on parole, probation, or extended supervision should be given the support and opportunities they need to thrive in their community. The ACLU of Wisconsin strongly urges committee members to vote against SB-93.

⁶ <https://doc.wi.gov/Pages/DataResearch/PrisonAdmissions.aspx>

⁷ “Ex-Offenders Under Watch,” Badger Institute (July 2019), <https://www.badgerinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/RevocationPDF.pdf>.



Wisconsin State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police



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Don Kapla
Immediate Past President

Jerry Johnson
National Trustee

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 93/Assembly Bill 85 Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

April 1, 2025

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety,

Individuals on extended supervision, parole, or probation who commit new crimes while under community supervision pose a persistent threat to public safety in Wisconsin. These offenders, already granted the privilege of release under strict conditions, demonstrate a lack of respect for the law and the trust placed in them by reoffending—often targeting law-abiding citizens, law enforcement, and the justice system itself. When such individuals are charged with new crimes, the current discretionary process allows them to remain in the community, forcing our members, law enforcement officers across Wisconsin, to repeatedly arrest the same people without resolution. This cycle places an unacceptable burden on officers, draining time and resources that could be better spent protecting communities. We offer full support for Senate Bill 93, mirrored by Assembly Bill 85, which addresses this problem by requiring the Department of Corrections to recommend revocation of release in these cases.

Those on extended supervision, parole, or probation remain in the legal custody of the Department of Corrections, bound by rules and conditions intended to promote compliance and rehabilitation. Yet, when they face new criminal charges, the system’s response must reflect the seriousness of their breach of trust. Allowing these individuals to stay on the streets pending lengthy reviews not only risks further harm but also overburdens officers who must continually confront the same offenders, eroding morale and public confidence in the justice system.

Under current law, a violation of release conditions may lead to sanctions, including revocation, but the process is discretionary and often slow, even when new criminal charges are filed. Senate Bill 93 strengthens this framework by mandating that the Department of Corrections recommend revocation whenever a person on extended supervision, parole, or probation is charged with a crime. The bill preserves due process—allowing for administrative hearings unless waived—but establishes a clear expectation that new criminal behavior will not be tolerated.

This legislation reinforces accountability for those who abuse the opportunity of community supervision. When offenders reoffend, they not only violate their conditions but also force our members to expend countless hours responding to the same threats, diverting attention from other critical duties. The cost of incarceration for revoked offenders—while significant—is outweighed by the cost of inaction, including victim harm and the relentless burden on officers and taxpayers when crimes persist unchecked. Senate Bill 93’s requirement for revocation recommendations sends a strong message: those who exploit their release to commit crimes will face immediate



Wisconsin State Lodge *Fraternal Order of Police*



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consequences, protecting communities and reducing the repetitive workload on law enforcement officers in Wisconsin.

We urge the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety to advance Senate Bill 93 promptly. Passage of this legislation will bolster Wisconsin's commitment to public safety, ensuring that law enforcement and the justice system can effectively address the risks posed by repeat offenders while easing the burden on our members.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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.



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Governor Tony Evers / Secretary Jared Hoy

To: Chairman Wanggaard, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
From: Anna Neal, Legislative Director, Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Date: April 1, 2025

RE: AB 85 and SB 93 - Relating to: recommendation to revoke extended supervision, parole, or probation if a person is charged with a crime.

Good Afternoon Chairperson Wanggaard and esteemed members of the committee.

My name is Anna Neal and I serve as the Legislative Director for the Department of Corrections (DOC). I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to Assembly Bill 85 and Senate Bill 93, which propose the revocation of extended supervision, parole or probation upon a person being charged with a crime.

Our agency understands and appreciates the intent behind AB 85 and SB 93, which aim to enhance public safety and accountability within the justice system. Keeping our communities safe is a shared priority. DOC also understands the importance of individuals on community supervision being held responsible for their actions. As corrections professionals, we are continuously working to prioritize public safety and balance this with successful reintegration and rehabilitation practices, while using taxpayer funding responsibly. We use evidence and research to help determine where to thread the needle and identify the most appropriate response to use when a client engages in any behavior in violation of their supervision, including criminal behavior.

While AB 85 and SB 93 are well intentioned, their impact could have significant unintended consequences. The bills require DOC to recommend revocation when a person is charged with a crime, which sets the process in motion at the most severe and punitive level. Automatically initiating revocation overlooks the opportunity for a more measured, case-by-case assessment and may unnecessarily disrupt rehabilitation efforts. Additionally, the bill lacks clarity on what constitutes formal charges – whether it refers to charges filed by law enforcement or those formally issued by a district attorney, creating ambiguity in its application. Further, revocation by code and statute is anticipated to be a fast process. There are times where evidence, both physical and testimonial, may not be available until the pending criminal case is developed. This bill may hinder the Department's ability to present a solid case at the administrative hearing, which could result in a person not being revoked and released to the community pending their criminal charges.

Being on community supervision (probation, parole and/or extended supervision) allows DOC the ability to investigate any and all violations and respond accordingly. Our agency uses an Evidenced Based Response to

Violations (EBRV) when an individual violates a condition of their supervision. For example, when a client commits a new crime, there are several factors DOC currently uses to decide the level of response, such as a client's risk level and the severity of the violation. An EBRV Matrix is then used to find the recommended response level (see below). Aggravating factors can be applied to increase the level of response.

		Risk Level		
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Severity of Violation	LOW	Low Response	Low Response	Medium Response
	MEDIUM	Low Response	Medium Response	High Response
	HIGH	Medium Response	High Response	High Response
	VERY HIGH	High Response	Very High Response	Very High Response

It is the Division of Community Corrections (DCC's) practice to consider alternatives to revocation when treatment or other less restrictive interventions are deemed appropriate for addressing the behavior, without undermining safety. DCC uses a variety of tools in addition to revocation to address behavior when deemed appropriate. Some of these include Electronic Monitoring, Short Term Sanctions, Residential Treatment, Treatment Court, Out-Patient Treatment, or Temporary Housing.

Implementing evidenced-based responses to violations is not unique to Wisconsin. It is a well-established practice across the nation that aligns with national trends for community supervision. Utilizing these approaches helps to employ strategies that effectively reduce recidivism and improve public safety. Moving away from this system of responses to violations would be a departure from national standards in corrections.

With that being said, revoking supervision is often an appropriate response when new criminal behavior is identified. Revocation, however, also leads to increased incarceration rates, straining correctional facilities and resources. It is our responsibility as a public entity to engage in the responsible use of our resources and consider any safe alternatives available that may better meet the needs of the client and community. If we did not consider such alternatives, it could inadvertently divert attention from individuals who do pose a greater threat to public safety and require the limited resources available from incarceration.

In a special report released in 2019, the Badger Institute collected data on revocations in Wisconsin and found that more than half of people in prison are serving a term of revocation. A study sample further showed that while 49% of revocations led to a criminal conviction, 51% did not. AB 85 and SB 93 would remove DOC's discretion on a large portion of the population that may not result in a criminal conviction, increasing costs and rapidly increasing our prison population.

Another consideration of AB 85 and SB 93 is the fiscal impact it would have. A new fiscal estimate was assigned to DOC on 3/3/2025 that will help us to better identify the fiscal impact of this bill, however last session, DOC completed a fiscal estimate for 2023 AB 310: *recommendation to revoke extended supervision, parole or probation if a person is charged with a crime and expunging a criminal record of a crime*. In that report, DOC

requested data from Wisconsin's Court System Circuit Court Access (CCAP) to determine the number of clients under community supervision during FY 19 and were charged with a crime. Using that data, the DOC estimated 6,280 clients on community supervision were charged with a new crime and remained on community supervision. Under the bill, DOC would be required to recommend revoking the supervision of all 6,280 individuals. Knowing that Administrative Law Judges affirm approximately 47% of revocations recommended by DOC, it is estimated there would be an average increased daily population of 1,599 in the first year and 4,673 after 19 months. It was estimated this would increase operations costs by \$72,772,574 during the first year, and have a permanent increased operations cost of \$209,284,074 after the population is annualized during the second year of enactment. The impact of such legislation would have unsustainable costs to DOC and our state.

Finally, AB 85 and SB 93 inaccurately state the Department "recommends" revocation rather than "pursues" revocation. While DOC does internally refer an individual for revocation, it is not a recommendation to the Division of Hearings and Appeals. Instead, under the applicable statutes, once the Department determines the person violated a rule or condition of supervision, the person is afforded a hearing before the Division of Hearings on those allegations, unless the person waives the hearing, in which case the Department is the reviewing authority. The only recommendation made is to the amount of time to be served upon revocation of extended supervision or parole.

It is the Department's recommendation to allow DOC to continue basing decisions regarding revocation on evidence and research, considering factors such as the nature of the new charge, the individual's supervision history and the overall risk to public safety. Allowing for alternative measures and graduated sanctions allows DOC to address underlying issues for behaviors and increases the long-term safety of our communities. Maintaining public safety will continue to be paramount to the Department's mission, but it remains crucial to balance this objective with the effective use of correctional resources and taxpayer's money.

DOC remains committed to working with this committee and legislature if there are additional questions or concerns related to AB 85 and SB 93 and/or their impact.

Thank you.



WISCONSIN STATE PUBLIC DEFENDERS

Mission driven. Client centered.

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

April 1, 2025

Chair Wanggaard and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective on Senate Bill 93. Under the bill, probation and parole agents must recommend revocation if someone on probation, parole, or extended supervision is simply *charged* with a crime, not convicted, disregarding the core tenet of “innocent until proven guilty.” The Wisconsin State Public Defenders oppose this bill and its proposed automatic revocation recommendations. As a result of this bill, more clients will face revocation proceedings, which means there will be a higher demand on an already limited resource: attorneys for SPD appointments.

Looking beyond the issue of resources, SB 93 seeks to eliminate the ability to assess the facts and circumstances surrounding allegations as well as the personal circumstances of the individual. Many people who are on supervision suffer from mental health challenges, as well as addiction related challenges. These challenges are complex and relapses happen. Revocation is not always the best recommendation, especially for people with complex needs, nor is it always the recommendation that leads to increased safety for community members. Oftentimes, alternatives to revocation are a better way to address the person’s mental health or recovery needs – even when the person is alleged to have committed a new crime – and when agents are able to work with the people they supervise to best meet their needs, our communities are safer and healthier.

SB 93 represents an attempt to restrict discretion in the criminal legal system and replace it with an automatic sentencing structure. Similar to the issues raised in the testimony we submitted on SB 76, we have serious concerns that removing discretion would erase the years of progress we have made as a legal system in adopting evidence-based practices. As public defenders, we rely on parole agents to thoughtfully review the circumstances and use evidence-based decision making to draw a conclusion. Evidence-based practices are in the best interest of our clients and our communities, and we oppose the ongoing efforts to ignore or restrict the use of these practices that have proven effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns. If you have any questions, please contact our Director of Government & Public Affairs, Steve Knudson at knudsons@opd.wi.gov.

Thank you to all the senators here today for giving me your attention on this topic. My name is Shannon Ross. My friends and colleagues have and will speak to various components of this bill—why we disagree with its necessity, its effectiveness, and its foundational premise. I'm going to provide some stories to hopefully infuse a bit of balance to the issue.

I want to share three stories relevant to this bill and I'll offer a brief introduction that I believe is relevant to my commentary.

Like many who oppose legislation like this, I've experienced the criminal legal system firsthand. I spent 17 years in Wisconsin's prison system, from age 19 to 36. While incarcerated, I earned my bachelor's degree in Business Administration—nearly entirely funded by my loved ones, as there was almost no financial aid available for that pursuit. An article I wrote for Boston Review about that journey led to a scholarship and fellowship for graduate school at UW-Milwaukee, which I completed in late 2022.

While inside, I also founded a nonprofit that currently employs 7 people, and focuses on helping people with criminal records succeed. Since coming home I've obtained several national fellowships and I'm currently a fellow with Marquette University helping build out their education preparedness program. In fact, I came here today straight from Racine Correctional Institution, where I spoke to a college class of men about my journey and what they can learn from it. I also co-run a multidimensional justice solutions firm called Paradigm Shift with my partner Adam Procell, who authored a bill championed by former Rep. Michael Schraa and signed into law by Gov. Evers last year, creating a one-stop shop for people returning to Milwaukee from incarceration—no matter where they were locked up—to access the support they need to stay out. And I've worked consistently with

decision-makers on both sides of the aisle on criminal legal reform events and issues, including several senators in the room today.

All of this, I do while raising a now 3.5-year-old son and juggling various board roles and side projects all aimed at public safety and empowerment, esp a better way society treats crime, survivors, and thrivers and those who cause harm.

1. I have 11 and a half more years on supervision, which means I am simply an allegation away from being arrested and confined for investigation every min of my life. And this puts me significantly closer to being charged than regular society members.
2. My friend Jeremy in Florida has been out for eight years with zero incidents, but recently got into a fight. He's a very successful business owner of a CNC shop that he built from scratch and a consultant with the software company aAirtable. He has two children since release and under this bill he would be recommended for revocation, and due to the historical odds of such a recommendation, sent back to prison and lose everything he's built. All because of a fight in which no one was killed or seriously hurt.
3. We had dinner last night to honor female law enforcement in Milwaukee for women's history month and as they spoke, three of the seven officers spoke about facing charges in their lives and one even was facing four felonies when she was approved to join the force. She has now been on the force for 24 years and is a higher up. Charges if they were on paper would've completely eliminated this opportunity and changed the trajectory of their lives.

But the topic runs far deeper than this legislation. There's a fundamental disconnect in how some decision-makers and members

of society view the prison and criminal legal system versus those of us who have lived it or watched our loved ones go through it. This disconnect is why we find ourselves here over and over opposing punishment centered legislation rather than more proven-effective approaches and why the overwhelming majority of the political ads I see focus on fear-mongering around crime.

What I've seen thoroughly in my work, conversations and readings is that most everyone values second chances and believe powerfully in healing, family, and community. That's what those of us advocating against this bill believe too. And it's not political as there are a number of conservatives in this work and movement. So legislatively we're often on opposite sides of an issue while wanting the exact same outcome.

We are those people whose loved ones are still inside. We live under the weight of a punishment that never ends even years after you're released, Even a mere arrest follows you forever. But we are rarely included in the process of crafting the very policies that affect our lives and our communities, but more importantly the very policies that could prevent what the stated goal of legislation like this is meant to achieve. It's like writing business law without talking to business owners. Like drafting gun regulations without talking to responsible gun owners. Like passing church laws without speaking to congregants or even understanding the scripture.

There is a universe of details, unintended consequences, and profound experiential reality that legislators have zero way of knowing about due to the reality of how the system works beyond the technical language of policies and the inherently limited lens of system personnel. These bills are so much more complicated than those who are supporting it and testified in favor of it understand, as is clear from

the black and white nature of their testimony. Those of us who live and breathe the system know this and we are almost begging you to hear us. I assure you without a shred of uncertainty that legislation like this will not only not achieve what it is intended to, but will create greater harm and instability in the most vulnerable families and communities in WI at an extreme cost to the state.

Another very important point to highlight is we work with crime survivors and thrivers regularly. There are many folks who have experienced harm that legislation like this is meant to defend and stand up for who do not agree at all with this approach and see the outcome as getting further away from what would've helped them after they began their journey through the system. How can the voice of some crime survivors and thrivers be used to justify legislation when it is an opposition to many others who have had the exact same experiences but disagree with legislation like this just as strongly?

The ultimate question is: How do we focus more on the sea of common ground we have amidst the islands of difference that keep getting in the way.

What is needed is that those of us with the most direct experience on this issue and the criminal legal system are involved earlier in the process. Society needs decision-makers to hear the full scope of stories on this issue. Our voice and experience and knowledge about crime and the system are necessary to get us closer to what we both want. I and/or someone from our coalition, would be honored to meet with you and offer a fuller picture of what's going on beyond the sensational news stories, simplistic data points, and limited anecdotes.

Thank you greatly for your attention.

Senate Judiciary & Public Safety Committee Hearing Testimony

April 1st, 2025 1:30pm

Good afternoon. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to submit my testimony today.

My name is Juli Bliefnick and I am writing to oppose the advancement of SB-093/AB-085, regarding the revocation of parole, extended supervision and probation. I have been on extended supervision for almost 9 years. The first two years, I had my share of struggles adjusting to reentry and accessing the resources I needed in order to succeed in the community, but eventually I achieved stability and maintained steady employment while completing my bachelor's degree. In 2023, I was accepted into UW Madison's dual post-graduate program for law and public policy, but I was forced to defer my acceptance due to health issues. My declining physical health led to severe declines in my mental health and I attempted to take my own life in December of 2023. I was struggling, and my agent knew I was struggling because I was in constant contact with her, so when I ended up arrested (for a charge related to my suicide attempt, which was later dismissed) she saw fit to give me a chance to get better rather than revoking me. She knew that despite the rough patch I had encountered and some desperately made poor decisions, I was motivated to do great things with my life if I could overcome the health issues I was facing. And she was right in giving me that opportunity, because since last year I have been giving back to my community through my work and the many committees and coalitions on which I serve, and I was able to finally start graduate school, where I have a 4.0 GPA. I also care for my aunt who is waiting on a kidney transplant, a responsibility no one else in our family was able to take on, and which would have resulted in her death if I had not been here.

None of that would have been possible if these bills were in play when I went through those difficult times. This bill eliminates agent discretion entirely, making no distinction between petty and severe offenses, and it will ultimately impact individuals with mental health and addiction issues more than anyone else. None of us truly believe the jail and prison system are effective solutions for addiction and mental illness, and no one who is familiar with how the correctional system works can say in good conscience that these increased penalties will somehow improve public safety. Our corrections facilities are already facing a severe deficit in programming and mental health staff, and this bill would exacerbate that issue and release more people back into the public without getting the services they need, making the community less safe. Had this bill been in effect in December of 2023, I would have been sitting in jail being revoked, in a suicidal state of mind, without access to my support system, therapist, or medications, instead of getting the help I so desperately needed. And I would have had almost six years added on to my extended supervision, because that's how it works when you get revoked. None of your time in the community counts. That's how a ten year sentence can turn into a twenty year sentence, and it's why our state has such a bloated prison and community supervision population in the first place. And for every example of a "violent criminal" being let off the hook while on supervision and continuing to commit crimes, there are ten, twenty, fifty stories like mine of people who are struggling with mental health or addiction issues and will not get the help they

need. It is shortsighted, to say the least, to focus on the few instances of the prior rather than the dozens of instances of the latter. If this bill was really about public safety, this committee would look to the robust cache of evidence that definitively debunks the idea that tough on crime approaches equate to increased public safety. I can send you hundreds of sources that have acknowledged that fact over the past several decades, and yet here we are proposing solutions that are actually problems in and of themselves. Year after year, these kinds of bills are proposed under the notion that we can just incarcerate our way to public safety, like that is the only solution. The lack of imagination and innovation of this legislative body is shameful. There are so many better solutions to these issues than just locking people up and forgetting about them until the next time they do something wrong, because they will do something wrong if you continue to deny them proper rehabilitative care. You should be investing the billions of dollars this kind of bill will end up costing into solutions that save people, and that save taxpayers money.

We could do any number of better things with the money that this will cost the state. We could invest in educational and vocational programs in the community that make people job-ready, which makes our state more productive and raises our GDP. We could invest it into more community-based alternative to revocation programs that save taxpayers over \$2.50 for every dollar we would spend on incarcerating them. We could invest in our mental health services across the state to make those vacant positions more appealing to people who actually want to help fix these problems. We could invest in housing assistance programs for people who have been incarcerated, because stable housing is proven to practically eliminate recidivism. We have options that don't involve throwing whole human beings away like they are worthless because they made a mistake. Would you immediately file for divorce if your spouse made a mistake, or would you start by setting boundaries or going to counseling first? We don't throw the human beings in our own lives away when they mess up, so why do we do it in the criminal legal system?

To the authors of this bill, and all of the tough on crime bills being discussed today, I encourage you to do your due diligence when you propose bills like this in the future. Talk to the experts, talk to the directly impacted people and their families, talk to the victims, because the majority do not support this (I've included a graph below). Acknowledge that the real goal here is not public safety, but rent-seeking at the expense of Wisconsin taxpayers. This is economic surplus for police and sheriff's departments, corrections officials and prison service contractors, and it yields no public benefit. The facts do not support these bills. Crime has been trending downwards since the 1960s, and yet incarcerated populations keep growing. It defies logic to continue with these policies when there are so many better solutions available.

So I encourage you to prove to me and the rest of the opposition to this bill that we are wrong, that you do have the wellbeing of all Wisconsinites in mind, and not just the few that benefit from these policies. You can do that by proposing more bills like SB-080, a bill that actually speaks to the root causes of crime instead of creating a bigger problem. You can do that by revoking your support of this harmful legislation and leaving these decisions in the hands of the agents, the

people who we've entrusted to know most about their clients' needs and how best to address them.

Thank you for your time.

Juli Bliefnick

4/1/2025

Juli Bliefnick is a current Master's in public policy student at Northeastern University, graduated from UW Oshkosh with a Bachelor's in Organizational Administration and a Certificate in Leadership Development. She works full-time as the Operations Coordinator for FREE Movement, Inc., co-chairs the Wisconsin Council of Mental Health's Criminal Justice Committee, is a member of the Justice Forward Wisconsin Coalition and chair of their research committee, is on the Wisconsin Prison Birth Project Guiding Board, the WISDOM transformation justice steering committee, and the Good Samaritan Law Coalition steering committee. She is a mother to a teenage son who loves baseball and fishing, a beloved daughter and partner, and a gifted freelance writer.

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What do victims of violent crime really want?

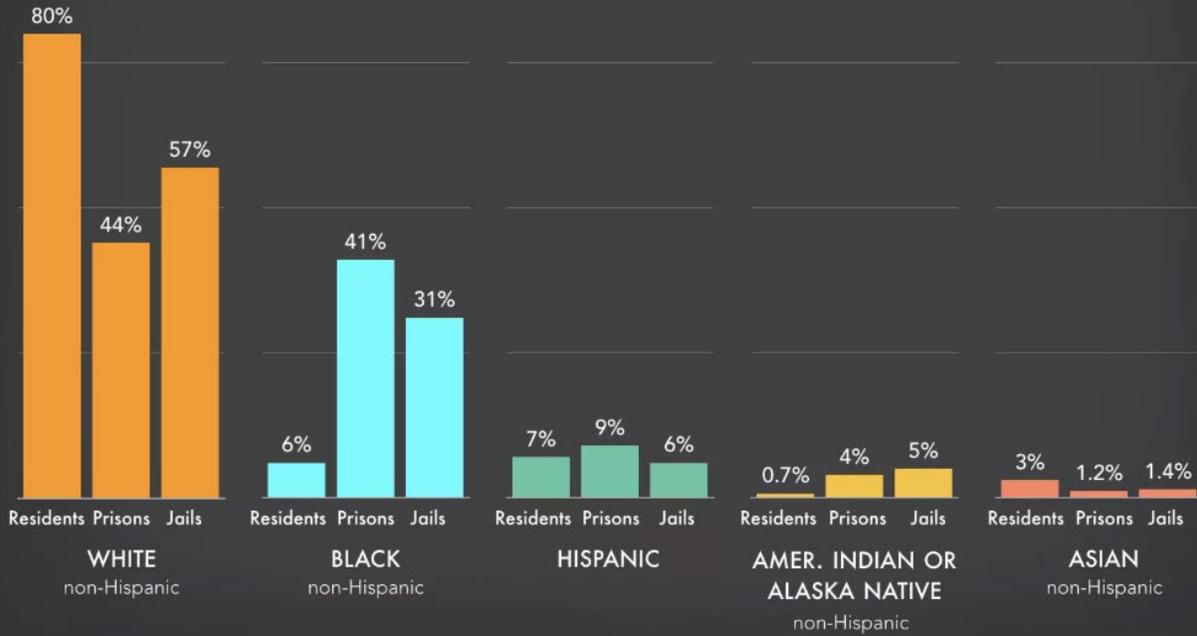
Results of a 2022 national survey of over 1,500 people who reported crime victimization within the past 10 years



Victims and survivors of crime prefer investments in crime prevention rather than long prison sentences.

Comparing Wisconsin's resident and incarcerated populations

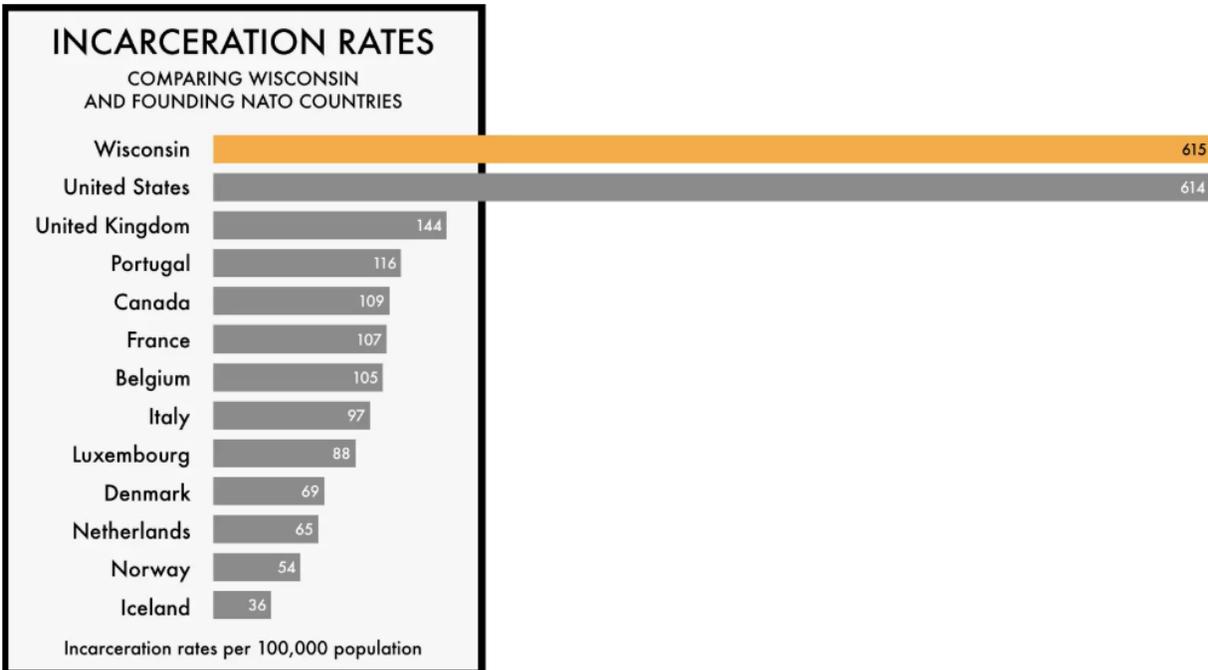
Percentage of state residents, by race or ethnicity, compared to the percentage of people in the state's prisons in 2021 and in local jails in 2019, by race or ethnicity. Compared to the total state population, Black and Native people are overrepresented in the incarcerated population, while white people are underrepresented.



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau data. For sourcing details and dataset, including race definitions and categories not displayed above, see: www.prisonpolicy.org/data/race_bystate_2021.xlsx.

PRISON
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Today, Wisconsin's incarceration rates stand out internationally

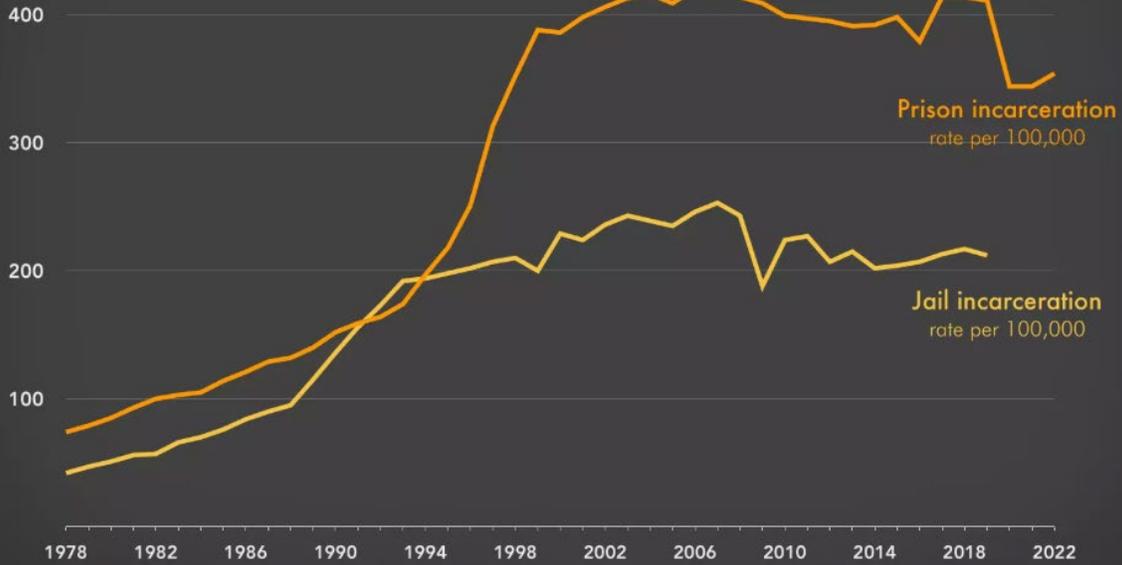


Source: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2024.html>

Rates of imprisonment have grown dramatically in the last 40 years

Wisconsin's prison and jail incarceration rates

Number of people incarcerated in state prisons and local jails per 100,000 state residents, 1978-2022

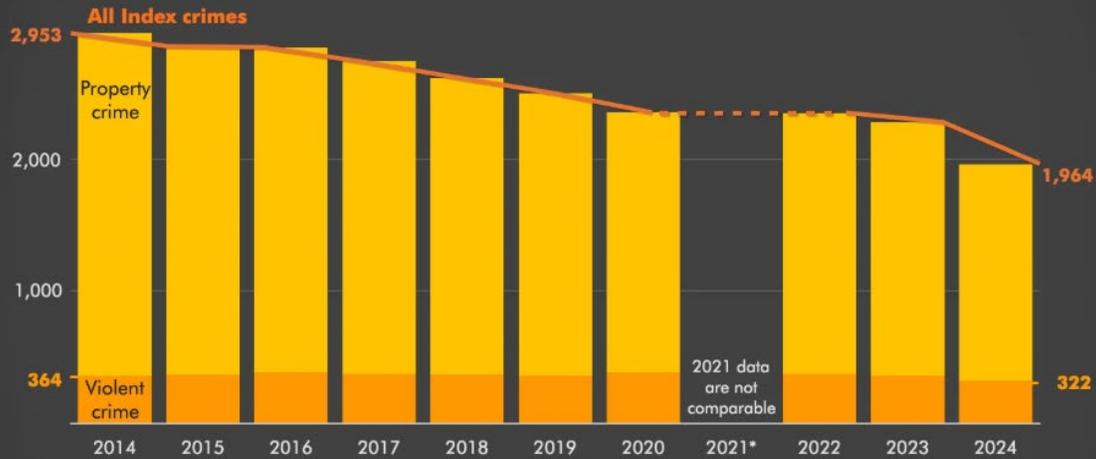


Jail populations were adjusted to remove people being held for federal and state authorities.
For full sourcing see: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2024/04/15/jails_update

PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

U.S. crime rates continue to fall, and preliminary data indicate that the 2024 crime rate was the lowest since 1961

Index crimes per 100,000 U.S. residents, 2014-2024



* The FBI warns that 2021 estimates were below statistically acceptable levels to be nationally representative and are not comparable to other yearly estimates. For that reason, we have excluded them from this chart.

“Violent” Index crimes include murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. “Property” Index crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft.

Sources: FBI *Crime in the United States* series and Crime Data Explorer, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 2003* Table 3.106, showing the Total Crime Index by year from 1960-2002 (for historical comparison). The Prison Policy Initiative estimated 2024 data based on the reported percent change in crime rates between the first six months of 2023 and the first six months of 2024 (violent crime: down 10%, property crime: down 13%). 2024 data should be considered preliminary until annual crime data are reported.