

Born, Nygren propose adding assistant DA positions

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GOP state Reps. John Nygren and Mark Born today proposed adding assistant DA positions in 40 counties starting next year to address staffing shortages.

The proposal, which carries a price tag of \$3.9 million annually, will be proposed as an amendment to a Senate bill that would require the Department of Corrections to revoke parole for those charged with a felony or a violent misdemeanor.

SB 54 is on the Assembly's Thursday calendar.

"This is an opportunity for us to make a smart, structural change to our system," said Nygren, R-Marinette and co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee.

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Nygren and Born, R-Beaver Dam, said they have briefed the gov's office on the plan. But they have not yet discussed the idea with the state Senate.

Their proposal would add 53.75 full-time equivalent positions with the allocation based on a 2014 Legislative Audit Bureau study of staffing levels and last year's budget requests from district attorneys.

First, the lawmakers looked at the LAB study, which calculated how much staff each DA's office had compared to its workload. From that, the lawmakers estimated the statewide average was enough staff to handle about 79 percent of the caseload.

From there, any county that was below the 79 percent mark was eligible for the proposed staff additions. The lawmakers then looked at the budget requests from those offices to divvy up the positions. The maximum any county could receive is two posts.

The proposal comes amid the final rush of the session with the Assembly hoping to adjourn at week's end.

Born, who also serves on the Finance Committee, said Assembly Republicans have been discussing public safety for weeks and have just now reached a consensus.

"That's why as a caucus we said. 'Let's fix what the bill does, but also fix some other things in the criminal justice system,'" Born said.