

Reps. August, Loudenbeck, and Horlacher: Area Legislators work to improve public safety

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MADISON...The understaffed Walworth County district attorney's office will get much needed state support under a bill supported by Representatives Tyler August (R-Lake Geneva), Amy Loudenbeck (R-Clinton) and Cody Horlacher (R- Mukwonago). Under the legislation that passed the State Assembly, the state will fund and allocate nearly 54 positions throughout the state to help alleviate critical staffing shortages in local district attorney's offices. The additional position in Walworth County will cut the shortage almost in half.

"Understaffing in our district attorney's offices can have massive impact on victim's receiving the justice they deserve," said August. "If you don't have the manpower to take these cases to trial, many times it leads to higher numbers of plea deals and criminals receiving lighter sentences. Now is the time to start reversing this trend."

"As Wisconsin's fiscal outlook continues to improve, it allows us to invest more in protecting our communities," said Loudenbeck. "In the 2017-2019 biennial budget, we were able to improve recruitment and retention efforts by approving pay increases for assistant and deputy district attorneys. These positions are the next step in improving our efforts to fight crime."

These additional assistant district attorney positions were approved as part of a

larger bill that would combat re-offenses by individuals that are currently on probation or parole. In some cases, individuals that are on probation or parole will not have that supervision revoked even though they are involved in a new violent offense. The bill would require the Department of Corrections to recommend revoking probation or parole in these cases.

“As a former assistant district attorney, I know firsthand the difficulties the office has faced due to understaffing,” Rep. Horlacher stated. “It is imperative that we not only give our law enforcement the tools, but also the positions needed to keep our families safe.”

Upon hearing of passage of the bill, Walworth County District Attorney Zeke Wiedenfeld was very supportive of the increased position authority.

“I would like to thank Representatives Tyler August, Cody Horlacher, and Amy Loudenberg for their hard work in passing this bill through the State Assembly,” said Wiedenfeld. “By investing in prosecutors and holding criminals accountable, we will continue our important duty to prevent the physical, emotional, and financial losses that too many Wisconsin citizens and businesses have suffered at the hands of dangerous criminals.”

The bill now awaits approval in the State Senate. Governor Walker has already signaled his commitment to signing the legislation.