

Walker campaign: Gov. Walker highlights risks to Wisconsin communities with Democrat plan to slash prison population in half

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Governor holds press conference, sends letter to law enforcement laying out concerns with troubling rhetoric from Democrat candidates for governor

[Madison, Wis.] – Scott Walker stood up for Wisconsin’s families Tuesday at a press conference in Milwaukee to address the troubling rhetoric coming from the Democrat candidates for governor as they continue to tout their plans to cut the prison population in half. At the press conference, the governor laid out the problems with this reckless plan – which would release thousands of violent offenders onto our streets – and how it puts Wisconsin families at risk.

“When it comes to violent criminals in prison, I want to keep them in — my opponents want to let them out. Ensuring public safety is one of the most important responsibilities I have as governor, and I have stood with law enforcement as they work tirelessly to keep our communities safe,” Gov. Walker said. “These plans to cut the prison population in half would put violent offenders back on the streets and show just how dangerously far to the left the Democrat field for governor has gone.”

Earlier Tuesday, Gov. Walker sent a letter to sheriffs across the state to emphasize

his concerns with the radical Democrat plan to cut the prison population in half. As the author of Wisconsin's Truth-in-Sentencing law, Gov. Walker is dedicated to providing certainty and peace of mind to families across the state - and most importantly to victims. With all the Democrat candidates having expressed support for early release, and many having publicly supported plans to reduce the prison population by 50 percent, Gov. Walker took a stand Tuesday to keep our communities safe.

See below for more information on what the Democrat candidates have said - in their own words - on cutting the prison population in half - a plan that will ultimately put Wisconsin families at risk and release thousands of violent offenders onto the streets.

Tony Evers

Moderator: "The multi-racial interfaith organization MICAH launched a campaign in 2011 to cut the state prison population by half from 22,000 to 11,000. It now sits at 23,000. Do you support that original goal?"

Evers: "Absolutely, and that's a goal that's worth accomplishing..."
(TMJ4 & UWM Host Democratic Gubernatorial Debate)

Mike McCabe

"First of all, our goal should be to cut our prison population in half. And we can do that. It's a realistic and achievable goal."
(TMJ4 & UWM Host Democratic Gubernatorial Debate)

Kelda Roys

"By the end of my first term, we are going to have half the number of people incarcerated as we do today."
(Bill Glauber, Democratic candidates for governor lay out plans at forum in Milwaukee, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 6/18/18)

Kathleen Vinehout

"Absolutely doable statistic."
(Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Democrats running for governor call for slashing prison population, 7/5/18)

Current Prison Statistics

The Democrats' goal is driven by the false perception that Wisconsin's prisons are

filled with people who are low-level drug offenders – this is simply not the case. The Department of Corrections' annual report breaks down the prison population by four offense types (violent, property, drug, and public order). The most recent annual report found that:

89% of inmates are in prison for a reason other than a drug offense.

67% of inmates have committed at least one violent offense.

o The term violent offense includes the following crimes: murder, non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, negligent manslaughter, kidnapping, sexual assault, simple assault, intimidation, illegal abortion, extortion, cruelty toward a child or wife, hit-and-run driving with bodily injury. (WI DOC Offense Categorization)

13% of inmates are in prison for property offenses.

o Property offenses include burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, stolen property (including receiving, transporting, possessing, concealing and selling stolen property), and other property offenses such as possession of burglary tools, damage to property, smuggling and other miscellaneous property crimes.

11% of inmates are incarcerated solely for a drug offense.

o Drug offenses include drug trafficking (Possession with Intent to Deliver or Manufacturing and Delivery), drug possession, and other drug offenses such as possession of drug paraphernalia and forged or unauthorized prescriptions.

9% of inmates are incarcerated for a public order offense.

o The term public order offense includes weapons offenses (including unlawful sale, distribution, manufacture, alteration, transportation, possession or use of a deadly or dangerous weapon or accessory), traffic offenses, DUI or DWI, probation or parole violations, escape, obstruction of justice, court offenses, non-violent sex offenses, commercialized vice, family offenses, liquor law violations, bribery, invasion of privacy, disorderly conduct, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and miscellaneous public order offenses.