

Sen. Bewley and Rep. Meyers: Statement on Ashland D.A. appointment

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Contact: Sen. Janet Bewley (608) 266-3510

Rep. Beth Meyers (608) 266-7690

MADISON, WI – As Ashland County and Northern Wisconsin face significant and increasing financial, legal and community challenges related to the ongoing meth and opioid epidemics, it is more important than ever that our communities are represented by law enforcement professionals with a deep and fundamental understanding of our area.

That's why we were so disappointed to read the outgoing Governor's press release announcing the appointment of a new District Attorney for Ashland County. It is clear that David Meany has no ties to the community or significant experience with local law enforcement or tribal issues. His main qualifications, based on the release, appear to be partisan allegiance and political experience in an outgoing Attorney General's office.

Our community is facing the current crisis without enough support from the current Administration and expressed a desire for new leadership last fall. We recognize the outgoing Governor's continued legal authority to fill this spot from the office he will be leaving next week, but the lack of community ties to local stakeholders, including mental health service providers, is troubling.

It would have been best for the outgoing Governor to give the incoming Administration a chance to seek a law enforcement professional with ties to our

community, knowledge of the unique challenges Ashland County faces and a proven commitment to the area that will bear the effects of this office's decisions and priorities in the years to come.

We hope District Attorney Meany has the experience to rise to the challenges of his new position and we offer our support to help him succeed. It's unfortunate, however, the outgoing Governor did not make Ashland a priority in his decision-making before leaving office.