

ACLU of Wisconsin: Denounces passage of fiscally irresponsible policies that threaten public safety

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MILWAUKEE – The ACLU of Wisconsin denounced the Wisconsin Assembly’s passage of a package of legislation that would worsen the state’s mass incarceration crisis. The organization asserted the measures would weaken public safety, weaken communities, waste taxpayer money, and divert resources away from priorities like mental health and addiction treatment.

“These measures would only worsen Wisconsin’s mass incarceration crisis and weaken public safety — all at a massive cost to taxpayers,” stated Chris Ott, Executive Director of the ACLU of Wisconsin. “Wisconsin taxpayers should not be on the hook for this harmful and counterproductive approach. We urge the Senate to stand with Wisconsin taxpayers and communities and reject these bills.”

According to the official fiscal analysis of the bill, AB805 – which calls for a revocation of a person’s extended supervision, parole, or probation – will [add an estimated \\$200](#) million in Department of Corrections operations costs in the first two years of enactment, adding to the \$1 billion Wisconsin taxpayers already spend annually on our criminal justice system.

“Two weeks ago, hundreds of Wisconsinites gathered at the Capitol with one, clear message: Wisconsin should be prioritizing people, not prisons,” said Sean Wilson,

Statewide Organizer of the Campaign for Smart Justice at the ACLU of Wisconsin.
“By passing this package of legislation, some Wisconsin legislators are showing where their priorities lie – and it’s unfortunately not with the people of Wisconsin.”

Wisconsin’s prison population grew more than fivefold between 1980 and 2016. Today, more than 23,000 Wisconsinites are imprisoned, and when people on community supervision or in local jails are included the number increases to 1 in 45 adults. In 2017 alone, more than 3,000 Wisconsinites were sent back to prison for technical violations, accounting for 45 percent of all new admissions to state prisons, the largest such group who were incarcerated that year.