

Rep. Sanfelippo: Democrats advocate for criminals while Republicans push for safer neighborhoods

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Madison, Wis. – Assembly Republicans recently introduced the Tougher on Crime Package comprising numerous bills that offer a response and solution to Wisconsin's ongoing crime problem. This package of legislation includes measures that will introduce accountability for prosecutors, oversight of Wisconsin's correctional system, transparency in its courts, protections for crime victims and witnesses, and, most importantly, consequences for violent and repeat criminals. By holding these criminals accountable, Republican supporters of the bill seek to reverse the upward crime trend and make sure that our communities are safe.

FBI data shows that violent crime rates rose across Wisconsin between 2008 and 2017, with the 10 largest cities seeing a 24% increase in violent crime rates, as compared with an average 14% decrease nationally. Meanwhile, the federal government has felt the need to intervene to offer Milwaukee help with its crime problem through Operation Relentless Freedom, alongside other particularly high-crime cities in the United States.

Despite these sobering statistics, Assembly Democrats raised serious opposition to the bills during a committee hearing last week. "Not once during the 5+ hours of debate at the hearing did any Democrat on the committee talk about crime victims or keeping families safe. Democrats' sole focus seems to be on sticking up for criminals while Republicans are the only ones fighting to protect the safety of

families across Wisconsin,” said Sanfelippo.

However, while Republicans offer solutions to the crime problem, Democrats in the state government continue to push measures to carelessly reduce the prison population, underscoring a fundamental disagreement over the purpose of the criminal justice system: Democrats believe that getting people out of prison is an end unto itself. Conversely, Republicans recognize that the criminal justice system must balance two goals: a prisoner’s rehabilitation and that prisoner’s potential impact on public safety.

“I don’t understand why anyone would put criminals and money over public safety by voting against these bills,” said Sanfelippo, adding, “Even the most liberal Democrat should feel some responsibility toward protecting innocent families who just want a safe neighborhood in which to raise their kids.”

Several bills in the Tougher on Crime Package are expected to receive a final vote in committee tomorrow morning.