

Tusler on 'UpFront' says Chisholm should change cash bail policy or resign

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The chairman of the Assembly Judiciary Committee said Milwaukee County DA John Chisholm should change his policy on cash bail or resign.

"If he refuses to do that, then he should step aside, and let someone who wants to prosecute crime prosecute it in Milwaukee," Rep. Ron Tusler, R-Harrison, said Sunday on "UpFront," produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

The suspect in the Waukesha parade killings, Darrell Brooks Jr. of Milwaukee, had a long criminal record and faced pending felony charges. But he was out on just \$1,000 cash bail at the time of the attack that killed six people.

Last week, Chisholm explained that the Brooks bail request was made by a young assistant district attorney who was juggling multiple cases and lacked access to a public risk assessment of Brooks.

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Tusler slammed Chisholm's explanation as "excuses."

"This wasn't a mistake," said Tusler, an attorney. "You don't go into a felony bond hearing and not look up the basic stuff."

Another Judiciary Committee member, Rep. Gary Hebl, D-Sun Prairie, defended Chisholm.

"John Chisholm is constantly accountable to the public. He's been elected five straight times. The people in Milwaukee like him and they think he's doing a

fantastic job. Mistakes happen, and this is a horrible, horrible mistake,” said Hebl, also an attorney.

Hebl said the Legislature has not provided enough funding for district attorneys to do their jobs properly.

“We can resolve part of the problem by giving adequate funding so these district attorneys are not overworked and underfunded,” Hebl said.

Hebl also said the state’s bail system needs to be reformed.

“Our current bail system in Wisconsin is antiquated and it really benefits the wealthy people charged, as opposed to the common everyday person. If you can post your bail, you get out, and that’s really not where we want to be looking at,” Hebl said.

But Tusler countered that the focus right now needs to be on what went wrong in the Milwaukee County District Attorney’s office, before changes in state law are considered.

“This ADA, and John Chisholm’s office, and their policies, set this up to happen,” Tusler said. “This is like playing Russian roulette with these ridiculously low bonds. And eventually it’s going to blow up, and it blew up in this situation in a big way and it’s time to change things. But Milwaukee can do it right now.”

Also on the program, Madison author Lawrence Tabak said his new book on Foxconn is a “cautionary tale.”

His book, “Foxconned: Imaginary Jobs, Bulldozed Homes, and the Sacking of Local Government,” digs into Wisconsin’s deal with the Taiwanese electronics giant.

The state’s original deal with Foxconn, signed by former Republican Gov. Scott Walker, would have made Foxconn eligible for nearly \$3 billion in tax credits if it invested \$10 billion in Wisconsin and created 13,000 jobs. That number of jobs never materialized, and Dem Gov. Tony Evers later scaled back the amount of tax credits.

“The incentives to do this are pretty broad, and they are particularly strong for politicians because the evidence is quite, quite powerful that politicians benefit from big deals like this, that people like to hear that their elected officials are creating

new jobs,” Tabak said.

“The fact that these jobs, in this case, didn’t come into existence is maybe a cautionary tale on why not to get so hyped up over these big deals. It just turns out that government isn’t particularly good at venture capital,” Tabak said.

Also on the program, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel politics and statehouse reporter Patrick Marley explained why the Wisconsin Supreme Court taking up a case on redistricting is seen as a big win for Republicans.

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