

# Assembly approves package to fund police recruitment, retention and training with ARPA dollars

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The Assembly today approved a series of bills to use federal ARPA money to fund recruitment, retention and training efforts for police officers, sending them to the Senate.

The bills, which largely passed along party lines, would direct Gov. Tony Evers to spend \$25 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds on a pro-police marketing campaign, training reimbursements, bonuses and new technical college police training programs.

Rep. Steve Doyle, R-Onalaska, was the only Dem to join his GOP colleagues in supporting some of the bills, including one that would spend over \$4 million on police training and recertification reimbursement. He also supported bills to create a pro-police marketing campaign, create grants for part-time officers, fund police training programs at technical colleges, and direct about \$15 million to grants for recruiting and bonuses.

Evers has already allocated all ARPA funds, but Republicans continue to push the gov to spend funds not yet specifically directed to certain projects on their police package.

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One of the bills would undo the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission's ban on no-knock warrants implemented last year and require Milwaukee to spend about \$157 million of its ARPA funds on police.

Rep. Supreme Moore-Omokunde, D-Milwaukee, slammed his Republican colleagues

for legislating what his home city can and can't do with federal pandemic relief funds rather than letting those who live in Milwaukee decide for themselves.

He also criticized the use of no-knock warrants.

"Ask Brianna Taylor about what happened as she slept in her bed on a mattress and she was gunned down in her sleep and police were only charged for the damage that they did to the walls and not to her."

Rep. Joel Kitchens, R-Sturgeon Bay, said no-knock warrants save lives, adding the courts and police together should decide if they're being overused.

"It's unconscionable that we could take that away from our law enforcement," he said. "Let them decide."

Dems also unsuccessfully offered amendments that would replace ARPA fund provisions with state tax dollars, arguing the general fund is a more reliable funding source long-term.

Ahead of today's floor period, Republicans said they wanted to preserve the surplus in the general fund and argued the federal money is available to spend.

The Assembly also approved several crime-related bills including:

\*AB 174, which would require the Department of Corrections to recommend revoking parole or extended supervision for those charged with a crime while on release;

\*AB 214, which would make it a Class I felony to refuse, resist or obstruct the installation of a DOC-provided ankle bracelet tracking device for those on release;

\*AB 827, which would charge those in groups who commit multiple thefts with all of the thefts the group committed;

\*AB 841, which would ban prosecutors from placing felons charged with illegal possession of a gun in a deferred prosecution program and ban prosecutors from dismissing or amending the charge without the approval of a court; and

\*AB 842, which would ban those in prison for violent crimes from early release or extended supervision.