

Howard Marklein: Improving juvenile justice

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The legislature's Joint Committee on Finance (JFC), which I co-chair with Rep. Mark Born (R-Beaver Dam) met on Tuesday, August 16, 2022 and took action on a number of important items. One of the most significant actions we took was to reallocate funding in order to continue progress on two county secure residential care centers for children and youth (SRCCYs) in Milwaukee and Racine counties. These centers are being constructed to replace the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake facilities in north central Wisconsin.

The SRCCY idea was developed to create residential care centers for children and youth in the correctional system that is closer to the communities where their families live. A significant part of rehabilitation and programming involves families and the legislature has been working to find ways to bring these services closer to the neighborhoods and communities where their families live. We want these programs to be successful.

In order to move these programs forward, we increased the grant authorization for Milwaukee County by \$13,123,058 and the grant authorization for Racine County by \$7,975,000 for the SRCCY locations in these two counties. To pay for this, we reallocated the grant authorization for Dane County by \$6,461,306 and Brown County by \$14,636,752. Both of these counties are supportive of this reallocation.

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Milwaukee and Racine counties are both moving forward with SRCCYs and are ready to break ground and begin renovations. This is one more way that the legislature is

keeping our promise to close Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake to provide correctional services closer to home for offenders.

In addition to the SRCCY allocations, we took action on several agricultural items at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). We allocated funding for the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot program and the Cover Crop Insurance Premium Rebates program. We approved the transfer of \$2.4 million from the environmental segregated (SEG) fund to DATCP to fulfill the intent of 2021 Act 223. Ag groups supported this approval.

We also approved the transfer of \$558,400 GPR in 2022-23 from the JFC supplemental fund to DATCP to fulfill the intent of 2021 Act 92 which created an Agricultural Export program to promote Wisconsin agricultural products around the world. As the bill's authors, Rep. Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) and Sen. Joan Ballweg (R-Markesan) have been monitoring the roll-out of this program. They are pleased with the progress and supported the approval of this funding. I was a co-sponsor of this legislation.

We granted expenditure authority to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) for 2021 Act 163 (Statewide License Plate replacement) and 2021 Act 178 (Fleet License Plates). We approved the department's requests for \$3,168,000 SEG and \$85,000 SEG to fulfill the intent of Act 163 and Act 178.

We approved \$107,400 in general purpose revenue (GPR) from the JFC Supplemental Fund to the Department of Tourism to provide the matching funds for the Wisconsin Arts Board to draw down a federal National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) grant.

Finally, we voted to dismiss two cases at the Department of Justice (DOJ) that the DOJ will not continue pursuing because of policy changes at the federal level.

Overall, it was a productive meeting that fulfilled many of our legislative obligations and moved several key items of legislation forward. Even though the legislature is recessed, the JFC continues to work hard to move important initiatives forward.

- Marklein, R-Spring Green, is co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee and represents the 17th Senate District.