

# Rep. Born: Bill to increase correctional officer pay passes State Assembly

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*Assembly Bill 828 passes alongside law enforcement support package*

**Madison** - Legislation that would increase the pay of correctional officers in Wisconsin, authored by Representative Mark Born (R - Beaver Dam), passed the State Assembly today with bipartisan support. Assembly Bill 828 would provide a \$5 per hour pay bump for all correctional officers working in prisons in the state.

“Economy-wide, employers throughout the country are suffering from the lack of workers—a challenge that has been exacerbated by the pandemic,” Rep. Born said. “Our adult correctional facilities are not immune from these challenges and face increasingly severe staffing shortages.”

Nine of Wisconsin’s prisons are operating with more than 25% vacancies, with even larger shortages at maximum security facilities. Waupun Correctional Institution and Columbia Correctional Institution, both maximum security facilities, have vacancy rates of 48% and 46% respectively. Employees of correctional facilities report mandatory overtime, often including traveling long distances or working 16 hour days for multiple consecutive days to cover the gaps in staffing.

“Even without these vacancies, the hardworking men and women staffing our prisons make big sacrifices to keep our communities safe. The addition of vacancies have caused unsustainable levels of overtime, making these positions even more stressful and challenging for our correctional officers,” Rep. Born added.

This proposal follows significant pay increases from both the 2019-21 budget, which

increased starting pay for prison guards by 14%, and the 2021-23 state compensation plan, which raises pay by \$5 per hour for facilities experiencing high vacancy rates and \$2 per hour for maximum security facilities.

Assembly Bill 828 was passed alongside a package of legislation that supports law enforcement recruitment and retention. Legislation in the package would provide hiring bonuses for law enforcement officers that relocate to Wisconsin and bonuses for existing officers; fund a police recruitment effort; create a part-time training program to attract non-traditional students to the field; fully fund officer training; and assist small police departments with costs associated with hiring new officers.