

Rep. Kitchens: To discuss law enforcement hiring issues

Posted on Thursday, Jan 6, 2022

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MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) will be holding a press conference on Friday to discuss the challenges that law enforcement agencies are currently facing, particularly with recruiting and retaining personnel.

Joining Rep. Kitchens will be Kewaunee County Sheriff Matt Joski and Sturgeon Bay Police Chief Clint Henry. The event will be held at 3 p.m. at the Sturgeon Bay Police Department, 421 Michigan St., Sturgeon Bay.

“The people of my district overwhelmingly support and appreciate the work of our law enforcement community,” Rep. Kitchens said. “However, these public servants have been confronted with many new challenges over the past few years. With this upcoming Sunday being National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, I thought this would be the perfect opportunity to express that support.

“I would also like to create more public awareness regarding the issues that law enforcement agencies are experiencing with staff shortages,” Rep. Kitchens added. “We are starting to reach a crisis here in Wisconsin and we can’t wait any longer to do something about it.”

For the first time in four years, the number of violent crimes in the nation has increased when compared to the previous year. During that same time period, Wisconsin outpaced the rest of the country with a nearly nine percent increase in violent crimes.

Yet, Wisconsin has the lowest number of law enforcement officers working in the state in at least a decade. There are currently 13,576 law enforcement officers in Wisconsin.

Unfortunately, law enforcement graduation rates are also showing the same trend. A total of 766 people entered the profession in Wisconsin last year, which is the fewest in the past 10 years.

Rep. Kitchens will also be taking some time during Friday's press conference to talk about a legislative package released this week that aims to show appreciation toward law enforcement agencies and assist them with hiring and retaining personnel.