

Rep. Penterman: Bill to fund the police passes the Assembly

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(Madison, WI). State Representative William Penterman (R – Columbus) released the following statement regarding the passage of Assembly Bill 837, a bill to help recruit and retain law enforcement officers.

“Wisconsin currently has the lowest number of law enforcement officers in a decade.

Nationwide, retirements are up by 45 percent and resignations are up by 18 percent. Local governments are having a hard time filling law enforcement positions,” said Rep. Penterman.

In Dodge County, officers are leaving at record pace for the private sector. Applications for employment have decreased from 100 or 150 applications per position to about 20. Many of those who do apply are not qualified. The Columbia County Sheriff stated that five years ago, they averaged nearly 100 applications per deputy opening and that in the past year they have not gotten more than 10. On top of that, they are constantly having to rehire, just to keep up with the number of individuals leaving the profession.

“This is more than a headache for human resources and law enforcement agencies. The reality of what is happening in law enforcement is profoundly impacting our communities. The people have spoken, and they want safe communities, not lawlessness. The time is now to invest in our law enforcement officers, and I am proud to be a part of the solution to refund our police.”

Assembly Bill 837 utilizes ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds to provide \$5,000 bonuses to all new law enforcement officers in Wisconsin. As an added bonus, the bill provides an additional \$1,000 per year of experience to officers who relocate to Wisconsin from out of state. The signing bonus is capped at \$10,000 and officers would be required to remain employed in the field for at least three years.

To show our appreciation to officers already serving in our communities, the bill requires agencies to provide \$2,000 bonuses to every full-time officer they employ. The state, using ARPA funds, would provide \$1,000 and the local municipality would provide \$1,000. Any officer with at least one year of employment with their respective agency would be eligible.

Representative Penterman's office is located at 8 West at the Wisconsin State Capitol. He can be reached at (608) 266-9650 or by e-mail at Rep.Penterman@legis.wisconsin.gov.

The 37th Assembly District includes portions of Dane, Columbia, Dodge and Jefferson Counties.