

WisDems: GOP candidates for governor have no serious plans to address public safety, increase shared revenue

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 15, 2022

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MADISON, Wis. - In a recent interview with [the Cap Times](#), Republican candidate for governor Rebecca Kleefisch failed to outline a comprehensive plan to improve public safety or defend her disastrous record on slashing funds that have helped hire first responders.

Kleefisch's proposals for public safety have already been panned by her primary opponent, Kevin Nicholson, [as "not a serious" plan](#). Nicholson also hasn't presented a public safety plan that amounts to more than talking points ... but we agree with him: Kleefisch isn't serious about public safety.

Lieutenant Governor Kleefisch's administration slashed shared revenue to localities, which is a crucial funding stream for various programs, including police departments, by \$76 million in 2011 alone. Then she made the situation worse by [cutting off the lifelines](#) from localities that might have allowed them to make up the difference. The Cap Times reports: "Wisconsin has seen a 15% decrease in the number of law enforcement officers working in the state, the Badger Project [reported last May](#). During mostly the same period — from 2014 to 2021 — shared revenue from the state to local municipalities has barely grown."

These policy decisions made it harder for localities across the state to be able to fully fund their community's commitment to public safety.

According to the Cap Times, Kleefisch now wants to add additional restraints on how communities spend shared revenue, but didn't say whether she supports increasing those funds to local governments. She also failed to offer specifics on how the state would assume responsibility for hiring local officers, a responsibility that falls on local departments and municipalities.

Kleefisch's refusal to prioritize public safety doesn't come as a surprise. In fact, cutting shared revenue is not the only move that defunded public safety in Wisconsin under the Walker-Kleefisch administration, they also:

- Proposed abolishing the Parole Commission in 2017 despite having nearly 3,000 inmates on "parole eligible" sentences in Wisconsin. [Their cuts would have shrunk the agency to one employee.](#)
- Cut grants from its Sexual Assault Victim Services program by 42.5 percent in 2011.
- Lost track of [nearly 3,000 people](#) convicted of sexual crimes.
- Had only [18 Department Of Corrections agents](#) assigned to keep more than 25,000 sex offenders in compliance.

On the other hand, Governor Evers has made funding public safety a priority. While attempts to restore funding to shared revenue have been rejected on multiple attempts by the Republican legislature, Gov. Evers has provided funding to law enforcement through funding of body-worn cameras, equipment, training, community-oriented police houses, increases to the Department of Corrections and Department of Justice, and mental health crisis intervention. Gov. Evers also recently invested \$45 million in public safety efforts across the state, including \$8 million to the Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention.

"Their lack of a comprehensive plan to address public safety and invest in violence prevention makes it clear: Rebecca Kleefisch and Kevin Nicholson would make Wisconsin less safe," said Democratic Party of Wisconsin Rapid Response Director Hannah Menchhoff. "Kleefisch says she wants to put more police on the streets when, in fact, she was responsible for undercutting localities' ability to hire more law enforcement in the first place. Republicans are part of the problem, not part of the solution."