

Rep. Rettinger: Puts soft-on-crime DAs & judges on notice

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Madison, WI – A freshman southeast Wisconsin lawmaker's second public safety bill was passed this month by the State Assembly. State Representative Nik Rettinger (R-Mukwonago) explained at press conference this morning that AB 57 would require prosecutors to gain the approval of a court to drop various serious charges such as illegal possession of a firearm, crimes against children, sexual assault, and reckless driving that causes great bodily harm. It would also require a court that authorizes dropping or amending a charge to file a report with the legislature to ensure transparency to the public.

Upon passage, Representative Rettinger issued the following statement:

"I appreciate my colleagues joining me in supporting this common sense, proactive, pro-victim legislation. As I have shared many times previously, we must get more serious about these types of crimes before they escalate to a tragedy. Whether we look to the Waukesha Christmas Parade attack, the reckless driving epidemic leading to horrific crashes, or the loss of a police officer in the line of duty, we shouldn't wait to be shocked into action by a high profile incident. Nor should the victims of these now all too common serious crimes, be left without justice when only a slap on the wrist is provided."

During his floor speech, Representative Rettinger further highlighted support that his bill has from several police groups, including the Milwaukee Police Association and Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association. This legislation was a product of a group of fellow legislators, who joined Rep. Rettinger in a Criminal Justice Working Group not long after the new session began. The legislators shared belief in supporting public safety and the need to identify solutions to the growing crime wave impacting Milwaukee and surrounding counties led to the creation of the group.

“I am proud to see the work of our Criminal Justice Working Group come to fruition today. Getting input from my colleagues, including some who also represent Waukesha County, was crucial in advancing our bills. Two judges in my home county of Waukesha, serving in the criminal division, informed me earlier this year that a majority of the defendants that have come before them have a Milwaukee address. It’s clear that the criminal justice system has become too much of a revolving door, keeping victims from finding justice.”

In addition to Rep. Rettinger’s bill, the State Assembly also passed several bills pertaining to addressing the rise of violent and serious crimes, such as carjacking and reckless driving. Milwaukee has seen a dramatic increase in car thefts in recent years, peaking at over 10,000 in 2021. In addition to his bill, Representative Rettinger also voted in favor of Assembly Bill 47, Assembly Bill 55, and Assembly Bill 58, among others. Assembly Bill 57 now awaits action in the Wisconsin State Senate