

# Rep. Stubbs: Introduces legislation to create an Office of Violence Prevention

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MADISON, WI – Representative Shelia Stubbs introduces LRB-0176/1, seeks to create an Office of Violence Prevention in the Department of Health Services. Representative Shelia Stubbs (D-77) released the following statement:

“To preserve the safety of our families and neighbors, we must address the persistent threat of violence. Violence is a public health issue, one that has haunted our communities for years with senseless tragedy. Too frequently, the lives of our neighbors are claimed or permanently altered by a preventable act of violence. In order to create and sustain safe communities where all can grow and thrive, we must stop interpersonal violence at its source.

By creating the Office of Violence Prevention in the Department of Health Services, we seek to address the myriad of violent crimes claiming and affecting lives in our communities. The office will address the systemic root causes of violence such as gun violence, domestic abuse, and child mistreatment in order to develop proactive solutions to these crimes. It will also issue grants to fund efforts in the community that have been proven to reduce violence. By collaborating with community leaders and organizations that are already working to address these public health and safety issues, we will develop a strong network of support to protect all those who call Wisconsin home.

It is imperative that we act fast to mitigate violence in Wisconsin because the degree and frequency to which violence is happening in our state is increasingly severe. In this year alone 172 people died of homicide in Milwaukee. Of those 172 homicides 88% were the result of gun violence according to the Milwaukee Journal

Sentinel. In Dane County, there was a shooting as recent as November 20, 2023. As of November 27, someone has died from domestic violence every 3.7 days in 2023. The level of harm that is being inflicted on so many Wisconsinites cannot be ignored. Action must be taken to restore the health and safety of our communities.

To address violence, we cannot simply crack down on crime, for violence is not only a matter of crime, but of the well-being and strength of a community. We need to dedicate resources to the prevention of these crimes before they happen, by bolstering our social services and investing in people, not imprisonment. This will allow us to address crime and violence on a proactive, rather than straining our already overcrowded criminal justice and correctional systems.

These measures are necessary if we are to stop the persistent threat violence poses to our families and neighborhoods. We cannot continue addressing violence on an individual case-by-case basis—we must collectively address the root causes of patterns of violence in Wisconsin. We all must work together if we are to envision a Wisconsin free of bloodshed and abuse, as well as to heal from the scars previous violence has inflicted on our communities. In the words of poet and activist bell hooks, “Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion.”