

Rep. Wichgers: Votes to reform bail

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Madison – State Representative Chuck Wichgers voted Thursday to put a constitutional amendment on the April ballot allowing voters to fix Wisconsin’s broken bail system.

On a bi-partisan 74 to 23 vote, the Assembly concurred with Senate Joint Resolution 2, imposing conditions for a defendant’s release prior to conviction, including setting bail. Representative Wichgers issued the following statement:

“It is hard to believe that judges are not allowed to consider the criminal history of a person when deciding on a bail amount, but that is what Wisconsin’s constitution currently says. This amendment will solve a problem that has plagued Wisconsin since the early 1980’s. First, the amendment will change “serious bodily harm” to “serious bodily harm as defined by the legislature by law,” and second, it will add factors that a judge can consider when setting bail, including what is a violent crime, the potential failure of a defendant to appear in court, and the potential intimidation of witnesses.

No other state in the country is as restrictive as Wisconsin in determining the factors a court can consider when setting bail. Judges need to be able use all the relevant information available to set bail. I support this common sense measure as part of my commitment to Wisconsin’s public safety.”