

Sen. Felzkowski: Votes to reform bail system

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Madison, WI - Today, the Wisconsin State Senate convened to vote on a constitutional amendment regarding bail reform, which will allow judges to consider public safety and the totality of the circumstances when setting bail conditions. Senator Mary Felzkowski (R-Tomahawk) voted with the majority in favor of the resolution.

Under our current Constitution, the only reason for which a judge may include monetary conditions when considering bail is to ensure the accused returns to court.

This constitutional amendment will provide judges with the ability to consider the following when setting monetary bail conditions for persons accused of a violent crime: previous conviction of a violent crime, the probability that the accused will fail to appear in court, the need to protect members of the community from serious harm, the need to prevent the intimidation of witnesses, and the potential affirmative defenses of the accused.

Sen. Felzkowski commented: "Wisconsin communities cannot prioritize public safety when the hands of our judges are tied. Our state Constitution is a sacred document, and changes to it aren't taken lightly. But enough is enough – it's beyond time to give our courts the flexibility they need to set bail conditions that help keep the public safe."

Pending passage by the State Assembly, this resolution will need to be approved by Wisconsin voters in a statewide referendum this spring.