

# Sens. Taylor, Roys, Larson: Democrats on Senate Judiciary Committee issue joint statement regarding vote on cash bail

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MADISON –Today, Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee), Senator Kelda Roys (D-Madison), and Senator Chris Larson (D- Milwaukee) issued the following joint statement regarding the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety’s vote on cash bail and changes to the Wisconsin State constitution:

“We will never forget the Waukesha Christmas Parade tragedy. As legislators, we join our colleagues in wanting to create safe communities. Today, we disagree on how to get that done. The issue of low cash bail has borne the brunt of blame and political grandstanding, for the inexcusable loss of life and injuries suffered that fateful day. But truthfully, there were many missed opportunities that could have likely prevented this senseless act of violence.” said Sen. Lena Taylor.

In a 5-3 decision, Republican members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety, voted to move forward a proposed constitutional amendment. Senate Joint Resolution 2 (SJR2), if approved by a majority of the state legislature, would change the way judges impose cash bail on defendants charged with committing violent crimes. Passage would meet the two consecutive legislative session threshold required for a Wisconsin ballot referendum.

“One thing we can all agree on is that our criminal justice system is broken. But you don’t fix an unjust system by taking one of its most badly broken pieces, dipping it in gasoline, and lighting it on fire. Our bail system lets rich criminals out of jail no matter how heinous their crime while forcing innocent people who happen to be

poor to stay in jail for months while they await trial. Dangerous people should not be free to hurt more people – regardless of how much money they have in their pocket. This amendment does not make us safer, and by locking up more innocent people will only make a bad situation worse”, offered Sen. Chris Larson.

“Public safety should be the key determinant of whether to hold someone in pretrial custody, not whether someone is rich or poor,” Sen. Kelda Roys said. “This proposed constitutional amendment doubles down on a failed system that lets wealthy people buy their way out of jail even if they are a risk to the community. Unfortunately, Republicans have decided to put politics before public safety, ignoring data that shows their approach makes us less safe, because they think they can manipulate voters in a cynical effort to win a Supreme Court race.”

“Bottom line”, Taylor concluded, “human errors in judgement or mismanagement does not constitute a constitutional failure or crisis. There are already provisions and tools, in existing law to keep violent offenders off the streets or better monitored. We just have to use them.”