

Evers “Setting A Positive Example” on Public Safety

Written by WisDems Press, Hannah Menchhoff
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MADISON, Wis. – In [an op-ed for the Milwaukee Courier](#) , Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley outlines how Governor Evers is doing the right thing on public safety for Wisconsinites.

In 2022 alone, Gov. Evers has invested more than \$50 million to help make our communities safer. These funds will go to every Tribal and local law enforcement agency in the state, as well as integrate licensed mental health professionals into Milwaukee’s 911 dispatch center, prevent reckless driving with road repairs, and expand pre-trial supervision staffing. More than \$16 million will go towards reducing the pandemic-related backlog of criminal cases statewide, including the backlog of cases in Milwaukee’s criminal division.

These investments follow years of systemic underfunding to Wisconsin’s public safety by Republican leadership. The Walker-Kleefisch administration slashed funding for localities to support services such as police departments by \$76 million in 2011 alone. This has left police departments, including in [Wisconsin’s largest city, Milwaukee](#) , decrying Walker-Kleefisch’s cuts, which negatively impacted their ability to fund those services.

Despite this, Republicans in the legislature continue to reject proposals from Gov. Evers to increase funds for localities to help keep people safe.

No [Republican running for governor has put out a public safety plan](#) that amounts to more than talking points.

Read more below on what Gov. Evers has done to invest in the safety of all Wisconsinites.

Milwaukee Courier: [Gov. Tony Evers Is Setting A Positive Example](#)

Every Wisconsinite deserves to be safe in their community. Violence in our communities is a crisis that needs our attention and action, and like any public health issue, it starts with

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prevention.

We have to focus on the root causes and invest in interventions and community-based solutions, and when our leaders make decisions about where money goes, the trusted people and organizations who are already doing this work should be at the center of the process.



Gov. Tony Evers is doing just that. He understands the hard work happens at the local level. But years of cuts by the Republican-controlled legislature are forcing our cities, towns and community-based organizations to do more with less. They are starving local municipalities by refusing to increase localized funding that can be used on local priorities, including to fund public safety and first responders.

With the Republican-controlled legislature turning down Evers’ proposals to increase local revenue payments, he’s taken action on his own to get communities like Milwaukee the resources they need to invest in public safety. Last fall, Evers invested \$45 million in violent crime prevention and crime victim services, including more than \$8 million for the Office of Violence Prevention in Milwaukee for violence prevention and support for crime victims. And just last month, the governor announced an additional \$50 million that included grants to help ensure fair and speedy trials and alleviate the backlog in our court systems caused by the pandemic.

We also need to take steps towards ending the gun violence epidemic. During his first term, Evers called on the Republican-controlled legislature to put aside partisan games and pass common-sense gun safety measures to protect Wisconsinites. But they rejected that proposal and went even further, attempting to make our state and our public schools less safe by allowing 18-year-olds to carry guns on school property. That kind of divisive policy making will only endanger our schools, teachers and our kids.

But what’s most important is Evers recognizes that we also need to look at the whole picture – safer communities aren’t only about the court system or law enforcement, it’s also clean water, quality public education, access to health care and good paying jobs, mental health resources, access to public transit, safe roads to drive, bike, and walk on and more.

In his \$50 million investment in our state, almost \$20 million was earmarked to Milwaukee to help with community safety projects such as preventing reckless driving, a big issue in our region and something so preventable if we fill potholes, update our roads, and put pedestrian safety first with road design. Beyond that, Evers has prioritized improving our education system, with the first special education funding increase and largest investment in general aid in a decade in his latest budget. Evers announced in Milwaukee in December that on top of the funds in the budget, his administration was investing \$110 million toward Wisconsin’s schools. Milwaukee Public Schools will receive about \$9.6 million of the new funds.

Evers has also worked to bring much-needed funding to local communities across the state

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and support local efforts to address the opioid epidemic. Last July, the governor hosted a press conference in Waukesha County announcing a law directing a larger share of money towards local governments to help combat the opioid epidemic.

We can trust Evers to continue to do the right thing when it comes to public safety. Not only is he investing in community organizations, he’s also investing in improving every aspect of the Milwaukee region, so that every Wisconsinites can live a safe and healthy life. We need our leaders in every part of the state to follow his lead.