



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

DATE: August 04, 2021
TO: Governor Tony Evers
FROM: Wisconsin State Legislature
RE: ARPA Funds for the Brown County Public Defenders Issue

Dear Governor Evers,

We write this letter to draw your attention to the request by the state public defender's office (SPD) for ARPA funds to address the ongoing backlog of cases before public defenders in Brown County due to the effects of COVID-19 on the Wisconsin Court System.

In general, comparing the first 52 weeks of the COVID-19 crisis with the 52 weeks prior, Brown County, in addition to several other counties, has seen a cumulative effect of cases continuing to mount. Meanwhile, not enough cases have been resolved to be able to alleviate the current backlog. Brown County has served as an epicenter to this court crisis. By utilizing ARPA funds to address the impact of COVID-19 on cases pending in the court system, the SPD could provide the necessary relief through the use of limited term employees over the next 18-24 months to alleviate this current, yet temporary backlog.

Other states, such as Vermont, are looking at utilizing ARPA funding to address ongoing backlogs in their respective court systems. We write to you in support of Wisconsin doing the same to address this issue. Without the use of additional resources it seems unlikely that this backlog is alleviated and will undoubtedly result in ongoing delays at the expense of our court system, taxpayers, and the rights of Wisconsinites.

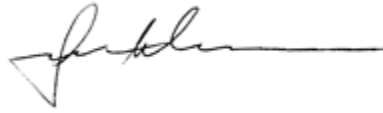
Sincerely,

Representative Shae Sortwell
2nd Assembly District

Representative Joel Kitchens
1st Assembly District



Senator André Jacque
1st Senate District



Representative John Macco
88th Assembly District



Representative Jim Steineke
5th Assembly District



Representative Elijah Behnke
89th Assembly District



Senator Robert Cowles
2nd Senate District



Senator Eric Wimberger
30th Senate District



Representative David Steffen
4th Assembly District