



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 7, 2021

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Rep. Bowen Statement on Necessity of Enhanced Violence Prevention Funding & Community Collaborations

"I am Committed to Fighting for Necessary and Lifesaving Investments in our Youth and Communities to Collaborate"

MILWAUKEE - In recognition of the ongoing epidemic of violence and homicides especially among young people in Milwaukee and across Wisconsin, State Rep. David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

"Yesterday morning, the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance formally began executive sessions to reshape Governor Tony Evers' biennial budget. Now that we've entered the unofficial beginning of 'budget season,' I am once again calling for expanded and enhanced violence prevention and violence interruption funding - not only at the state level, but at the county, municipal & school district level in Milwaukee & across Wisconsin. The past year has witnessed a troubling uptick in violence and homicides within our communities, especially among our young people. This cannot continue. Significant, dedicated funding sources must be made available for combating the epidemic of violence in our streets!

Study after study has shown us that the return on investment for violence prevention and interruption funding is significant - one study has even gone so far as to show that for every \$1 spent on prevention, the community receives as much as \$16 in cost savings. Increasing funding for these life-saving programs is not only the life-preserving and morally-right thing to do, it is also a fiscally sound investment in our communities and our citizens. Currently our calls to double down on what works have largely been ignored. No well-resourced state, county, city, or school district suffers increases in violence like what we are witnessing, especially in the midst of a pandemic.

As the Joint Committee on Finance begins to rework Gov. Evers' budget, which included many items I specifically asked for on many topics, once again I ask to see significant financial commitment to violence prevention and violence interruption programs and to saving lives within our communities. I also hope to see an increase in funding for these initiatives at the local level as well - at a time when we are reconsidering public safety and how best to spend limited resources to keep our communities safe, investing in these programs and new community collaborations is a proven method of reducing crime in our neighborhoods.

And beyond simply calling on others to take these steps, I myself am committed to fighting for these necessary and lifesaving investments in our youth and communities: in the coming weeks, I will be introducing legislation to ensure that the Wisconsin Department of Health Services receives \$3.2 million in dedicated funding annually, revenue-neutral with no need for a new tax, to provide direct grants to Wisconsin municipalities for violence prevention and interruption programs. While we could & should do more, this is a balanced place to start to gain bipartisan support. There is no one way to end violence in our state, but smart, targeted, and proven investments in violence reduction & mobilizing communities will go a long way towards ending this epidemic of violence and towards ending families needing to bury their children!"
