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Rep. Sanfelippo Calls for Tougher Stance on Repeat Offenders, Unlicensed Drivers after Death of Milwaukee Police Officer

Officer's death allegedly caused by repeat criminal and bail jumper released just days before deadly chase

Madison, Wis. – New details have emerged regarding the extensive criminal history of the man who allegedly refused to pull over after being flagged down by police for reckless driving and led Milwaukee Police on a deadly car chase, resulting in the death of Officer Charles Irvine, Jr., and injured Officer Matthew Schulze, 36.

Court records and other reports indicate that the alleged driver, Ladell William Harrison, 28, whose driver's license was already revoked, has an extensive history of criminal activity and driving violations, having been cited for drunk driving and has had his license revoked multiple times. In his most recent case, Harrison skipped out on numerous court appearances, violated previous signature bonds, and had multiple arrest warrants issued to compel him to appear in court. Despite this repeated pattern of behavior, Harrison was inexplicably released on yet another signature bond. A week later, he allegedly led police on this deadly car chase.

In the wake of these revelations, Wisconsin State Representative Joe Sanfelippo renewed his calls for the criminal justice system to take a tougher stand against repeat criminal offenders and individuals who illegally operate motor vehicles without valid driver's licenses or liability insurance.

“For too long, our judicial system has taken a lax approach towards repeat criminals: instead of keeping these offenders in custody, the courts have been playing a game of catch-and-release, unnecessarily jeopardizing the safety of innocent citizens and putting law enforcement in harm's way. It's inconceivable to me how a court could look at a criminal, who has repeatedly skipped out on his previous bonds and court appearances, and still release him on nothing more than a mere empty promise to return. It's grossly irresponsible,” said Sanfelippo.

Governor Scott Walker recently signed a series of bills authored by Sanfelippo and Senator Leah Vukmir, known as the Victim Prevention Package, which increased penalties for repeat violent criminal offenders and gave juvenile correction facilities the discretion to extend the sentences of those offenders who failed to demonstrate progress towards rehabilitation. Sanfelippo also intends to reintroduce earlier legislation to address the growing problem of drivers operating vehicles without licenses or insurance, adding, “Wisconsin is not taking the problem of unlicensed and uninsured drivers seriously enough. We have individuals driving illegally in this state because they know that there are no consequences facing them. We need to take a hard look at increasing penalties for repeat violators and impound their vehicles until they demonstrate compliance with the law. It's the only way to prevent senseless tragedies like this from occurring again.

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The [15th Assembly District](#) includes most of West Allis and the northern half of New Berlin.