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Wisconsin's Largest Police Group Calls For Senate Action On Proposed Police Reforms

WPPA unveils legislative review, highlights successes and critical work to be done

(MADISON, Wis.) –The Wisconsin Professional Police Association (WPPA) released today a legislative review of the laws Wisconsin has enacted since the death of George Floyd and other high-profile law enforcement cases around the country.

“One year ago, almost to the day, we called upon our elected officials to address meaningful police reform,” said WPPA executive director Jim Palmer. “Since then, law enforcement, communities of color, faith-based organizations, and elected officials from both parties have rolled up their sleeves to help implement meaningful police reform in Wisconsin. ”

In September of 2020, the WPPA unveiled “[A Blueprint for Change](#)” featuring a broad array of police reform measures. Several proposals backed by the WPPA were among recommendations issued by the Speaker’s Task Force on Racial Disparities in April. Of those Task Force recommendations, eight of them have already become law, but other bills that have been approved by the state assembly have languished in the senate.

Palmer said the Blueprint for Change was the most-detailed initiative of its kind by any police group in the country and reflects law enforcement’s genuine desire to be a part of the solution to the problems that we as a society collectively face.

Some of the recommendations issued by the Task Force this April have already been enacted into law. Included are measures prohibiting officers from using chokeholds except in life and death situations, ensuring greater access to agencies’ use-of-force policies, instituting the statewide collection of data related to law enforcement’s use of force, and establishing financial support for more community policing efforts.

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2-2-2-2 WPPA Blueprint for Change Legislative Update

Most notably, Wisconsin has formally adopted a uniform standard governing law enforcement's use of force, including deadly force. The first of its kind in Wisconsin's history, this new law also requires officers that witness excessive force on the part of another officer to report it and intervene if possible. The law also creates "whistleblower protections" for officers that report excessive force or intervene to stop it by protecting them from any adverse employment action, such as discipline.

Despite these significant advancements, the state assembly has also overwhelmingly approved measures mandating the collection of data on the use of no-knock warrants, uniform standards for the certification and training of school resource officers, psychological exams for individuals applying for law enforcement jobs, additional crisis intervention training, drug tests of officers following critical incidents such as shootings, and financial aid to help communities invest in body worn cameras.

Palmer concludes, "If the senate fails to keep moving forward on police reform, no one should be surprised when the calls for change grow louder and more radical with the next controversial police incident. Such an outcome would represent an enormous missed opportunity to effectively serve the interests of the public and of the dedicated men and women that work to keep our communities safe."

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With over 10,000 members from almost 300 local association affiliates, the WPPA is Wisconsin's largest law enforcement group.