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September 20, 2019

Dear Governor Evers, Speaker Vos and Majority Leader Fitzgerald:

The local government leaders listed below urgently call on you to take action against incidents of mass violence. Mass shootings and other deadly rampages have become too common in American society; according to the United States Conference of Mayors, there have been 250 such incidents in 2019 alone. We cannot continue the cycle that involves wringing our hands for a week and then moving on to business as usual.

The League represents the interests of Wisconsin's 412 Villages and 190 Cities. The local first responders in those communities are the people charged with facing the dangers of those incidents and protecting the lives of our citizens. Those first responders need your help.

Virtually all gun regulation is the purview of the Wisconsin Legislature. As such, it is up to you to determine the right response to this epidemic; whether that response be more complete background checks, "red flag" laws, increased resources for mental health response, prohibiting habitual criminals from possessing firearms, et al. Municipal leaders respect your role in deciding on a proper course of action, but we beg you: please decide; please act.

We also ask you to consider providing cities and villages with additional tools to help curb this epidemic. Resources for training civilians and first responders alike are limited. Following the mass shooting at a Florida high school last year, you responded with Wisconsin Act 143, setting aside both resources and training for schools, and establishing frameworks for collaboration. The League respectfully yet urgently suggests that the need for training and collaboration is every bit as necessary at other community places, both public and private. Several states including California, Maryland, and New York have established statewide violence prevention funds to support local, public health approaches shown to prevent and reduce violence. As the September 2018 shooting at a private office in Middleton and the May 2019 death of an Appleton firefighter at a bus depot demonstrate, random violence is not limited to schools.

This issue has many facets and arouses strong emotions. That is not surprising. Finding consensus will be hard. That cannot, however, be an excuse for doing nothing. Our citizens depend upon us; we must respond. Cities and villages will respond when the call comes in, as surely it will. We ask for your support to prepare for that response.



Jerry Deschane
Executive Director

YOUR VOICE. YOUR WISCONSIN.

This letter is submitted with the support of the following local officials:

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