

Scott Walker's Failed Public Safety Record

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Melissa Baldauff
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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/scottwalker-dream-279h.jpg>



MADISON - Wisconsin is suffering mightily under the failed leadership of Scott Walker. In his first term, Walker used draconian cuts to crucial programs and services to carry water for big, extreme, special interest groups. The severity of Walker's cuts hurt across the board, but they especially undermine any effort to ensure the safety of all Wisconsin citizens.

Walker's near-sighted approach to governing led to the Department of Justice having to propose cuts to sexual assault victim grants by 42.5% - a devastating blow to organizations who rely on such grants to help victims of sexual assault. Those funds cover staff, therapy, crisis intervention, and education for victims who likely wouldn't be able to receive those services otherwise.

Later that year, Scott Walker announced a new round of budgetary cuts just two days before Christmas with the Department of Justice receiving \$2.46 million in new cuts. The agency responded by cutting \$1.36 million from the criminal history searches and fingerprint identification services - a crucial blow since the Department of Justice earns revenue by performing searches for businesses.

During that same round of brand-new Christmas Eve cuts, the Department of Corrections saw last minute cuts to the tune of \$9.46 million. The agency responded with \$3.8 million in operational cuts, \$3.9 million in youth aide programs, and \$846,400 in sex offender management.

In addition to cuts, Walker's record includes double-speak to police and fire personnel. The governor exempted police and fire officials from his atrocious decision to strip public employees of their right to collectively bargain, stating Wisconsin couldn't afford to lose emergency personnel due to walk-offs in protest. However, Walker's bill included language to prohibit police and firefighter unions from having any say in the design of their health insurance. Municipal leaders have had to make up for Walker's deep cuts in state-aid by leveraging their control over healthcare plans to force benefit concessions from police and firefighter unions.

In fact the Wisconsin Professional Police Association, the largest police union in the state,

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mentioned local leaders statewide have threatened huge health insurance cost increases if they don't start contributing to their retirement funds.

In Greenfield, for instance, police and firefighters agreed to pay more for insurance, rather than face a \$10,000 family deductible. Greenfield Mayor Mike Neitzke said he had to make up a \$760,000 reduction in state aid over the next two fiscal years and commented, "I only have so much money."

Perhaps nowhere is Walker's mismanagement of public safety institutions more visible than the Dodge Correctional Institute in Waupun. Since 2011, prisoner assaults on correctional staff have dramatically increased. Union officials and workers attribute the increase to a combination of low morale, an exodus of experienced staff, and unfilled vacancies.

Prisoner assaults on staff at the Dodge Correctional Institute in Waupun have dramatically increased in 2011. Union officials and workers are saying that it is at least partially due to a combination of low morale, unfilled vacancies and an exodus of experienced staff.

Background

Scott Walker's first budget as governor included mandates that called for all state agencies to cut spending by 10 percent and find another \$174.3 million on top of that. (Appleton Post Crescent, "Wisconsin plans to reduce sex assault victim grants", [12/4/11](#))

Two days before Christmas Scott Walker's administration announced a new round of budgetary cuts. The Department of Justice is receiving \$2.46 million in new cuts. (Wisconsin State Journal, "State releases details of budget cuts; UW System to take biggest hit", [12/24/11](#))

The Department of Corrections is on the receiving end of \$9.46 million in last minute cuts. (Wisconsin State Journal, "State releases details of budget cuts; UW System to take biggest hit", [12/24/11](#))

After exempting police and fire personnel from the "budget repair bill", language was included that prohibited police and firefighter unions from having any say in the design of their health insurance. (Associated Press, "Police, fire personnel paying more under law", [1/6/12](#))

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Municipal leaders are now trying to make up for the deep cuts in state aid by leveraging their control over health care plans to force benefit concessions from police and fire unions. (Associated Press, "Police, fire personnel paying more under law", [1/6/12](#))

WPPA Executive Director Jim Palmer said, "These employers tell their officers that unless you agree to pay this, we will make health insurance nearly unaffordable for you and your families." (Associated Press, "Police, fire personnel paying more under law", [1/6/12](#))

In Greenfield, police and firefighters agreed to pay 12.6 percent of their health care costs and 5.9 percent of their earnings toward their pensions, like the rest of city's employees, rather than face a \$10,000 family deductible. (Associated Press, "Police, fire personnel paying more under law", [1/6/12](#))

Prisoner assaults on staff at the Dodge Correctional Institute in Waupun have dramatically increased in 2011. (Fond du Lac Reporter, "Dodge Correctional Institution sees rise in attacks on guards", [12/8/11](#))