

Action Needed Now to Address Prison Safety Concerns

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Winnebago County Executive Mark Harris urges action to address problems with under-staffing and worker safety at state correctional facilities.

OSHKOSH, WI – After hearing concerns from correctional officers, Winnebago County Executive and State Senate candidate Mark Harris is urging action to address problems with under-staffing and worker safety at state correctional facilities. Harris noted that assaults on correctional officers have been detailed across the state, including at Green Bay, Columbia, and Racine correctional facilities.



“Before this dangerous situation becomes unmanageable, we must work to reform our criminal justice system and create a safer environment for our correctional officers and inmates,” said Harris, who pointed to recent state budget cuts as a cause of the concerns with under-staffing. “Too many correctional officers are forced to work double shifts, which make it difficult for families to plan child care, attend a kid's ball game, or simply take the family dog out for a walk. If we want to attract and retain top-notch correctional officers, we need to improve safety, reduce forced overtime, and restore a sense of work-life balance to these positions.”

Harris is running for the open 18th State Senate district containing Dodge, Waupun, Taycheedah, and Oshkosh correctional institutions. According to data from the 2014-2015 Department of Corrections budget, the four facilities collectively house an average of 6,029 inmates daily, accounting for more than a quarter of all inmates in the state.