

A May 2005 news release from the office of Governor Jim Doyle boasted that he had returned back into an already overcrowded prison system, every prison inmate who had been housed in an out-of-state facility. There were 5,000 prisoners in the program in order to reduce costs because it was cheaper to house inmates in facilities outside Wisconsin.

Governor Doyle's statement boasted that judicial leniency, in the form of shorter sentences, would inevitably lead to lower incarceration rates and lower costs. He touted the expansion of treatment programs that had no historical or empirical proof of success, instead of quickly returning to prison those who violated their supervised early release.

At the time, a report from the office of then-State Senator Gwen Moore on the idea of bringing these inmates back, states that, ...*"it would be impossible to place inmates housed in private out-state prisons back into Wisconsin facilities since Wisconsin's prisons are already overcrowded."* The governor did not heed this advice and did it anyway. It is obvious that none of his bold predictions came true, which is why he's back again, wanting to release even more criminals into Milwaukee neighborhoods.

Now in 2009, Governor Jim Doyle wants to once again play Russian roulette with the safety and security of our seniors, women and children who are disproportionately the ones most affected by fear, violence and disorder. Statistically the people who will pay the highest price in the form of injury, death and emotional trauma in the form of fear will be Milwaukee's minority community, because that is where the majority of these criminal perpetrators will return. They will not return to where

Governor Doyle and Department of Corrections Secretary Raemisch live. I live in the city of Milwaukee; Doyle and Raemisch do not.

For them to propose this dangerous experiment shows how out-of-touch they are with the reality of criminal behavior. For the governor to make policy decisions on public safety, solely for budgetary purposes is reckless, irresponsible and an abdication of his most elementary responsibility--that being to secure the personal safety of citizens. Studies and research show that states with lenient sentencing and corrections policies have higher rates of recidivism. The numbers don't lie. This budgetary proposal does.

Crime has become ingrained human behavior by the time we send criminals to prison. Rehabilitation will not work with this group. As Aristotle pointed out, a man is what he continually does. Thinking happy thoughts about changing the behavior of career criminals is no way to develop policy. Crime **will** rise if done this way.

I'm sick and tired of the word game being played by the governor and other criminal sympathizers where they use the term "non-violent" to refer to the prison population that he wants to release early. I'm here to tell you that there are very few "non-violent" people in the **state prison** system. It's not where we send all law violators; it's where we send the worst of the worst. U.S. Department of Justice figures show that **well** over half of those currently in prison are there for violent crimes, and many are repeat offenders and habitual felons. Those locked up for drugs are mainly dealers belonging to notorious street gangs.

Even if the governor offered early release to his so-called "non-violent" criminals--whatever that means--their numbers are so few that it will not ease either the incarceration costs or the lack of space. In order for Governor Doyle's budget proposal to have an impact, the standard will have to be lowered to where sexual predators, armed robbers, people

who use firearms to settle disputes, and drug dealers will be included in his **inventory reduction sale**. How do I know this? It's happening now. Citizens are unaware of what goes on at the state Department of Corrections because the media pays little attention to state DOC release policies.

Here are my recommendations. I am imploring Governor Doyle to do two things. **First**, pull his recommendation to commute prison sentences to save money, and instead order Secretary Raemisch to immediately write a plan to re-institute the policy of moving state inmates into the out-of-state facilities. This will in the short term ease the overcrowding problem and allow time for more deliberate and thoughtful consideration of who is worth the risk of releasing early.

Second, place into the budget a policy change that would repeal the law prohibiting private prisons from operating in Wisconsin. The state should sell its prison assets and contract out for at least some of the operation of state prisons to start, and gradually turn it all over. A 2002 Harvard Law Review report analyzed that "*correctional services provided by private prisons usually outperformed public prisons in the area of costs, accountability and operational flexibility. They use fewer administrative personnel, and implement effective programs that reduce overtime and employee use of sicktime.*"

Public safety cannot be achieved painlessly or cheaply. One of the main reasons that prison costs are so high in Wisconsin is because they are inefficiently run.

Here's just one example of a person who was put out on early release from the Wisconsin state prison system.

- In March 2007, Michael R. Green pleaded guilty to a killing, and nine other felony counts, in the brutal murder of sandwich delivery driver Joseph Munz.
- The absolute laundry list of crimes Michael R. Green was charged with, from first-degree reckless homicide for shooting Munz in the Riverwest neighborhood to the string of armed robberies leading up to that deadly encounter, was the final chapter in a life of crime.
- Munz, a University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee student from Lodi and former football player, paid the price of a system that doesn't lock up those who need to be removed from society.
- The evidence? Green had previously served three years in prison after killing a 3-year-old boy in a 2001 high-speed hit-and-run accident, for which he was on extended supervision when he killed Munz.
- Even though Green was sentenced to eight years in that killing, it wasn't really eight: because of concurrent sentences and liberal use of parole, it was 3 years in custody, and 3 years of extended supervision.
- How long after Green got out of those measly 3 years of confinement before he was rearrested for killing Munz? Under 2 ½ years.