



OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Milwaukee County

SCOTT WALKER • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Date: March 6, 2009
To: Wisconsin Police Chiefs
From: Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker
Subject: Governor Doyle's Budget Proposal for Early Release for Inmates

As you know, Governor Jim Doyle's 2009/2011 state budget proposal was introduced last week. His proposal makes some very dramatic changes to the criminal justice system.

Specifically, he would allow convicted criminals to earn early release from sentences of confinement in state prisons. This would apply to criminals sentenced since December 31, 1999, when parole and early release were abolished in Wisconsin.

I know this law very well as I was the author, along with former Rep. Tom Sykora, of the Truth-in-Sentencing legislation that ended parole and early release.

When we passed this important piece of legislation, it was clear that the public – and particularly victims of crime – wanted to know with certainty that a convicted criminal would serve his entire sentence of confinement in a state prison.

We wanted the certainty of knowing that – in Wisconsin - a 10-year sentence actually means 10 years in prison. Now, up to 3,000 of the 22,000 convicted criminals in the state prison system maybe eligible for a significant reduction in their sentences.

As law enforcement professionals, you know better than the politicians in Madison how important this is to public safety and to a strong criminal justice system. At a time when crime rates are down in many parts of the state, we cannot afford to let up on our efforts to improve public safety.

With this in mind, I encourage you to join me in asking the Governor and the members of the State Legislature to remove this language in the proposed budget. We need to restore Truth-in-Sentencing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Scott Walker".

Scott Walker
Milwaukee County Executive