



131 W. Wilson St., Suite 505
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
phone (608) 267-2380; (800) 991-5502
fax: (608) 267-0645
league@lwm-info.org; www.lwm-info.org

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To: Governor Tony Evers

From: Curt Witynski, Deputy Executive Director & Toni Herkert, Government Affairs Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Re: SB 119, related to decreasing shared revenue payments to municipalities based on decreased funding for law enforcement officers

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities opposes SB 119, which both houses of the Legislature recently passed on nearly party line votes. We urge the Governor to veto the bill. Our reasons for opposing are:

- As DOR's fiscal impact estimate indicates, for most communities in Wisconsin decisions on whether to reduce police spending are driven by financial challenges posed by levy limits and shared revenue reductions rather than debates over the merits of "defunding the police."
- This bill blocks communities from shifting police funding to provide drug and alcohol treatment, mental health services or other innovative and creative approaches to addressing chronic public health challenges.
- Maintenance of effort mandates like this directly interfere with the ability of local elected officials to decide how best to balance municipal budgets and choose funding levels for competing critical service needs.
- The bill makes the highest cost services a municipality provides off limits for budget reductions when revenues are short. Police services consume on average 20% of municipal operating and capital expenditures by Wisconsin municipalities. Fire Departments are a close second.
- Given law enforcement's large share of overall local government spending in Wisconsin, many municipalities have little choice but to consider cuts or freezes to police spending whenever financial challenges intensify due to unanticipated events like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for considering our veto request.