



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

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety  
From: Curt Witynski, J.D., Deputy Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities  
Date: March 11, 2021  
Re: SB 119, Decreasing Shared Revenue if funding for law enforcement officers is Decreased

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities opposes SB 119, requiring that shared revenue payments be reduced for any municipality that decreases funding dedicated to hiring, training, and retaining police officers. We object to SB 119 for the following reasons:

- 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 service 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.
- 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.

We urge the committee to vote against recommending passage of SB 119. Thank you for considering our comments.

*YOUR VOICE. YOUR WISCONSIN.*