

HYPOCRISY: EARLY RELEASE

Walker said he conducted an “aggressive” lobbying effort to defeat Doyle’s early release proposal, however, no such efforts were ever articulated to reverse early release proposals to ease jail overcrowding and trim costs, and he shortchanged the public safety budget by \$5 million for 2010. Walker also suggested hiring more prosecutors to cut prison overcrowding, though he proposed cutting judges and court staff just a few years earlier

Walker, the Milwaukee County executive, contacted every sheriff and district attorney in the state last year as part of what he called an aggressive lobbying effort to defeat the proposal included in Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle's budget.

Walker co-sponsored the bill creating Wisconsin's truth-in-sentencing law 10 years ago that eliminated time off for good behavior. He said Tuesday that the answer to prison overcrowding is hiring more prosecutors. Doing that, he said, would make it easier for them to determine which criminals are worth prosecuting and sending to prison and which ones can be handled in other ways.

[Associated Press State, 5/4/2010]

2005: Early release considered to trim county costs

Fed up with the cost of keeping municipal prisoners, Clarke said he would seek talks with area police and judges but, if necessary, would act unilaterally to steer ordinance violators from the county or release them early.

Milwaukee Deputy Sheriffs' Association President Roy Felber, who worked eight years in the County Jail, agreed with Clarke about crowding but said it seems unwise to release municipal offenders to save money. Serious crimes often are prevented through municipal-ticket stops, he said.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 1/14/2005]

2007: Inmates released early to clear space

A summer surge in the Milwaukee County inmate population prompted the early release of 50 people from the Milwaukee County Community Correctional Center, House of Correction Superintendent Ron Malone said. The work release inmates from the center were placed on electronic surveillance a few

weeks early to avoid overcrowding at the jail, the House of Correction and the Community Correctional Center, Malone said.

Stepped up police enforcement this summer accounts for the boost in inmate numbers, Malone said. Mayor Tom Barrett's Neighborhood Safety Initiative has focused extra patrols on high-crime areas at a cost of some \$2.4 million in police overtime. The move has produced some 2,354 arrests, according to the Police Department.

On Friday, the jail had 899 inmates, the House of Correction in Franklin had 2,026 and the Community Correctional Center had 318. That's a total of 3,243, or 57 below the maximum allowed. "This term 'overcrowding' is relative," Clarke said. "As long as we have the high crime rate like we do in the city of Milwaukee, we better have that jail full."

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 9/16/2007]

2010: Public safety budget has \$5 million hole: "There are consequences to how you have patched this budget together."

Milwaukee County Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. says his 2010 budget has a nearly \$5 million hole in it, which will force him to release 120 jail inmates to home detention, discontinue inmate rehabilitation programs and possibly reduce freeway patrols.

"There are consequences to how you have patched this budget together," Clarke says in a letter to County Executive Scott Walker, County Board Chairman Lee Holloway and other supervisors. "That is not a threat; it is reality."

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 01/13/2010]

Walker proposed 25% cut in court staff, forcing shutdowns of civil court branches and early release of accused criminals. Suggests court officials sue the state for more court aid

The depth of the cuts stunned the county's chief judge, who denounced the elimination of 10 judicial commissioners and 64 other workers as reckless and sure to force shutdowns of civil court branches and early release of accused criminals.

In addition, the number of bailiffs provided by the Sheriff's Department for courtroom safety would fall 20% in a separate cut. Brennan said the move would make courts less safe.

Brennan said regular judges would have to fill in on intake at high-priority courts such as criminal. That would cause dramatic slowdowns in small claims, divorce court and the rest of civil courts, she said. "This proposal shuts down our civil courts," Brennan said.

Walker acknowledged that it is too late to get more state court money for 2006 in the state budget process, and that previous county lobbying efforts had failed.

He suggested that local court officials sue the state for more aid.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 09/30/2005]

Walker's cuts = "get out of jail free cards;" Judge pleads for funding and Walker accuses him of "intimidating the County Board."

Walker said later that Brennan's strategy was "all about intimidating the County Board" into reversing the 25% staffing cut that judicial officials say will grind small claims court to a near halt because higher-priority criminal cases must be heard in a timely way.

"Threats of lawsuits and threats to close courts . . . amount to nothing more than holding a gun to the head of the County Board and using the people who pay the bills - taxpayers - as hostages," Clarke said. John Barrett, the elected clerk of courts, told supervisors that Walker's cuts would mean backups in intake court to the point that "criminals could be lining up for get-out-of-jail-free cards."

Brennan, who has talked of legal action against the county to get reasonable funding, said she couldn't get a meeting with Walker this summer after taking over as chief judge Aug. 1. The county executive's secretary "said he was going to be unavailable," Brennan said.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 10/13/2005]