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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

**WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS**

2001-02

(session year)

Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or joint)

Committee on ... Corrections and Courts (AC-CC)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

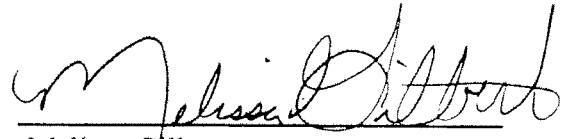
- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

* Contents organized for archiving by: Mike Barman (LRB) (May/2012)

- None.

March 14, 2002

Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Melissa Gilbert", written over a horizontal line.

Melissa Gilbert
Committee Clerk



March 24, 1999

Probation and Parole Agents
P.O.Box 510853
Milwaukee, WI 53203

Representative Scott Walker
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

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folder

Dear Representative Scott Walker,

We members of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Division of Community Corrections, Absconder Unit, based in Milwaukee, WI, have decided to write you in an attempt to bring to light some of the issues and challenges we face and feel have not been adequately resolved by our management.

Since our date of activation, March 30, 1998, our primary job responsibilities include the location and apprehension of: fugitives, probation and parole offenders who have violated their rules of supervision, and/or probation and parole offenders who have additional warrants issued for their arrest. The importance of the location and apprehension of these individuals, and the great threat these individuals are to the community while unsupervised, is very clear.

Since our inception, we have faced many obstacles that we feel have not been properly handled by our administration. For example, we work in extremely dangerous situations, flagrantly face a severe lack of equipment and adequate training, and are subject to unclear, untimely policies and procedures that inhibit us, if not prohibit us, from safely and effectively performing some of our duties.

After painstaking negotiation with our administration, they finally provided us with some essentials, such as: body armor (threat Level II), OC spray (2oz.), restraints, and surveillance equipment. A select few of us have received a limited amount of training. We have yet to engulf the benefits of the technological world, including access to the internet and offender tracking programs. We do not have firearms. However, based on our experiences in the Absconder Unit, and the constant, deadly level of force that we face while on the job, we feel that our position greatly warrants the need for such a self-defense mechanism. This is not only to ensure the safety of the Agents in the Absconder Units, but also the safety of the public, who frequently becomes involved.

We believe every attempt we make to locate fugitives poses a threat to our safety. The Department of Correction's current policies put our lives in jeopardy on a daily basis, and restrict us from effectively apprehending offenders who are in violation of their probation or parole.

We request that Agents of the Absconder Units be permitted to carry a firearm while on duty. We have documented a number of instances where a need for firearms is applicable and completely necessary. We are not properly equipped or trained to effectively protect ourselves, or the community, from the level of force which we face while apprehending offenders in fugitive status, who may be armed and/or under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

Attached is a memo we submitted to our Administration requesting the right to carry firearms. We were denied the request based on the following reasons: 1) We received training in Arrest and Custody Tactics (ACT), 2) We have the option to call the police for assistance, 3) We have not used the OC spray, 4) We have the option to disengage in any threatening situation, 5) It would be a huge task for the Department of Corrections to provide training for firearms, 6) The Department of Corrections in Wisconsin has never in its history, armed any of its agents.

- [Signature]

1. Referrals

- same people (others are armed)

• Page 2

March 19, 1999

These reasons do not substantiate why we should not carry firearms. The ACT training that was provided to all agents was 16 hours of basic instruction on self-defense and handcuffing offenders, taught to be applied in an office setting. The Absconder Units Agents work in the field, which usually means in the fugitives' homes, basements, attics, alleys, at their jobs, etc. The training was rather limited and was based on the precedent that we must disengage in a dangerous situation. The Absconder Agents are concerned about the times we do not have the option to "disengage." We can call for police assistance; however, their response time may not be quick enough. To call for police assistance at each residence is not efficient or practical. We are working in a law enforcement capacity but we are not armed! We have not used our OC spray as of yet. This does not mean that we have not encountered situations where it would have been justified. We realize how fortunate we have been so far, to not have any of our fellow Agents injured in our job capacity. We prefer to take a proactive standpoint, not a reactive one. Firearm certification requires 40 hours of training, which some of the agents have already completed. The State of Wisconsin is virtually the only state that has a fugitive unit that is not armed!

We are seeking your support in helping us obtain our goals as employees of the State. These goals are to assist our communities in becoming safer places, with a high quality of life, as well as assisting our offenders in becoming more productive citizens, by holding them accountable for their behavior.

We respectfully request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience, (during our non-pay status), to discuss issues further. We also invite you to spend some time with us in the field when we are attempting to locate fugitives. This will give you a better understanding of the challenges we face while trying to successfully fulfill our job requirements. Please understand that we enjoy working in the capacity of the Absconder Unit and take great pride in what we do. We want to give taxpayers the security and safety they pay for, deserve, and expect.

We are available to you for mail correspondence at the address listed in this letter, or feel free to contact us by telephone, using any of the numbers listed below. We look forward to hearing from you.

- 2500 - (1600 cases resolved)

Sincerely,
 - MPD Jones
 - Shurt - Baldwin
 - Lybrate Ecnul

Probation and Parole Agents-Absconder Units, Milwaukee

Dishon

FBI Task Force - skt for AP
 Violent Crimes / Fugitive Task Force
 MOH - Region 3 Dir. of (mmb) Coord

[Signature] Aaron Anderson (414) 277-7051
[Signature] Kyle Chapman (414) 325-9691
[Signature] Scott Pederson (414) 642-3807
[Signature] Jill Koskitalo (414) 840-5544
[Signature] Sarah Klappauf (414) 962-8833
[Signature] Jennifer Arndt (414) ~~205-993~~ 638-6027
[Signature] Jason Strabis 414-607-1991
[Signature] Richard Anke 414-304-0284



MEMORANDUM

from SHAUN HAAS
Legislative Council

DATE: 6/2/99
TO: REP. WALKER
RE: RIGHT TO CARRY

1999

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APPARENTLY YOU DID NOT
RECEIVE MY E-MAIL
RESPONSE TO YOUR
MAY 20 INQUIRY RE
"RIGHT TO CARRY" - ENCLOSED
IS ANOTHER COPY. CALL
IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.

JUN 02 1999

Haas, Shaun

From: on behalf of Shaun Haas, Leg. Council
To: Walker, Scott
Subject: RE: Right to carry

Under s. 941.23, Stats., only a "peace officer" can go armed with a concealed firearm. "Peace officer" is defined in s. 939.22, Stats., and without a change in either the definition or broadening of s. 941.23, Stats., to include parole/probation agents assigned to the absconder unit, these individuals are not allowed to carry concealed firearms. Additionally, and perhaps more significantly, an administrative rule of the Department of Corrections specifically does not allow probation/parole agents to carry or use a firearm, concealed or unconcealed, while on duty. The only exception allows the carrying and use of oleoresin or capsicum. See s. DOC 328.20. If you don't have access to the Administrative Code, call and I'll send over a copy of s. DOC 328.20. I suggest you give Bob Margoleis, DOC Legislative Liason, a call and discuss the Department's very strong views on this issue (6-2931).

-----Original Message-----

From: Walker, Scott
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 1999 2:27 PM
To: Haas, Shaun
Subject: Right to carry

Recently I met with the absconder unit of parole and probation agents. Currently, they do not have the right to carry a firearm? Does it require a statutory change to give them that right or can the DOC grant it to them?

Thanks,

Scott

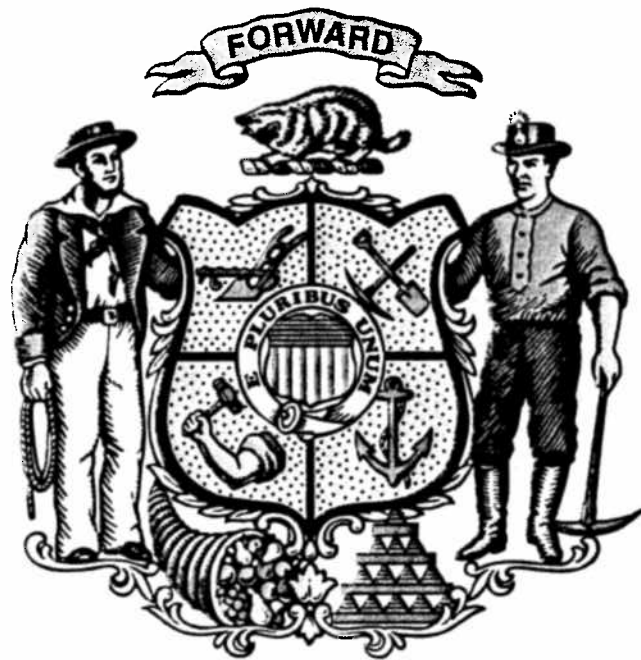


Gilbert, Melissa

From: Kevin Wallace [WKG01@doc.state.nc.us]
Sent: Tuesday, December 28, 1999 1:28 PM
To: Melissa.Gilbert@legis.state.wi.us
Cc: Sherry H. Pilkington
Subject: Re: absconder inquiry from Wisconsin lawmaker

Approximately 60% of our officers are firearms qualified and trained. They are allowed to carry these weapons while conducting any and all job duties. We do not have a mandatory carry policy but encourage our officers to use all of their safety equipment in the performance of their duties. Only Community Probation Officers, those who supervise the lower risk/ lower need offender do not have firearms issued to them. While we do not have Absconder units all of our absconders are assigned to Intensive Surveillance Officers who have backgrounds in Law Enforcement and Corrections. We are a state agency, however encourage all of our staff to seek law enforcement assistance when conducting arrests, searching, etc.
If more information is needed, please advise.
Kevin Wallace, Executive Officer, NC Division of Community Corrections.

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Gilbert, Melissa

From: Kim Mersman [kim.mersman@doc.state.co.us]
Sent: Thursday, January 20, 2000 9:43 AM
To: Melissa.Gilbert@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Response to letter 1/7/2000

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Melissa:

The following is where you can find the information that you requested in regards to the Administrative Regulations on Firearms for the Corrections Department in Colorado. I hope it will be beneficial to you.

Go to www.state.co.us

Select under Government - State agencies

Select under State Departments - Corrections

On the left hand side of the page, select Administrative Regs.

Select AR Index

Go to 0300-32 99htm

or 0300-33 99htm

or 0300-34 99htm

These Administrative Regs. are the ones used by our department regarding firearms. Our fugitive regulations are restricted and are unavailable. Presently, there is a proposal for a "Fugitive Apprehension Team", but it is not in place yet.

Our state does have Parole units and the Officers do carry weapons. They are considered in the Colorado State Statutes as Peace Officers Ia.

If you need further information, feel free to contact me at kim.mersman@doc.state.co.us

Thank you for your interest in our department.

Kim L. Mersman
Statistical Analyst



Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Monday, June 05, 2000 8:32 PM
To: Melissa.Gilbert@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: meeting with Grosshans

Paul Reif here. Thank you for taking the time to meet with Mr. Grosshans. We are somewhat concerned about submitting specific lists of the ways in which we believe the absconder unit is being characterized and stymied by the department if for instance we 1) file a lawsuit against the department, or 2) continue to voice our concerns that we have, and face further harassment, retaliation, and defamation of our characters and careers by our regional managerial staff. We will attempt to forward general issues that we have already voiced in the past, that exist today, and that may present themselves in the future, though. We hope to forward this list by the end of this week or early next week.

In regard to the implication that most members of the unit are now satisfied with the current supervisory situation, I can only say that that is an inaccurate observation, if not false altogether. We asked a number of our co-workers if they were talked to about the supervision of our units, all denied. Also, as evidenced by the petition we forwarded to you regarding the removal of Sarah Shultis it is clear the majority were against her removal. I believe Mr. Grosshans received a copy as well.

Lastly, it is our belief the Department continues to oppose arming agents in the absconder unit purely for political purposes, and an unwillingness to accept the responsibility that comes with carrying a firearm. Today we again talked about this issue and even threw around the possibility of being in a different division than DCC (Community Corrections) so that politically the Department can accept this issue. We would still have to be under DOC but perhaps expand to our own division or fall under DAI, as a Probation and Parole Violations Division or something to that effect.

Currently, we have been divided into four work groups: case assignment, work hours, safety, and training. Regional management is asking for our input into these areas so that they may redesign the unit if need be. We are to report back to them by June 23. We hope that we are not wasting our time, and that when we make suggestions on how to operate our unit most efficiently we are taken seriously. We are the only ones who have done this job and would like to lay solid groundwork for those who one day may succeed us. I'm sure some of us would possibly like to supervise these units someday and our experience would be most beneficial. Talk to you soon. Your attention to our concerns is sincerely appreciated .

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Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Sunday, June 11, 2000 10:23 PM
To: Melissa.Gilbert@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Issues that are hampering success of Milwaukee Absconder Unit

We have come up with a number of issues that are severely and adversely affecting the success of the absconder units in Milwaukee. This is not an all inclusive list, nor is it intended to focus solely on the negative. Many good things have occurred and many successes have been enjoyed. However, we have a long way to go until we are "running on all cylinders" so to speak. Our major issues are as follows:

1) Agent safety is being compromised due to politics, not common sense and reason. We lack proper equipment to perform this dangerous job safely and effectively. No other agency that performs this type of work would ever do this job without a firearm for self defense and deterrance. Not being armed severely compromises our safety and limits our ability to apprehend absconders. It currently takes at least six people to make a house for an absconder. If we were armed this number could be reduced to four. Other items that effect our safety and effectiveness are: poor radio communication system, improper vehicles, inadequate vests, small quantity of pepper spray, no police back up for 2nd shift, to name a few.

2) We believe we are being harassed when we voice our opinions and beliefs on how the unit could function more effectively and safely. We base our suggestions on daily experience and some research. Our professional judgement should be taken more seriously.

3) Search policy needs modification. We leave a lot of absconders in residences based on our current policy.

4) The Absconder Unit has rarely been fully staffed, meaning 20 agents, 2 supervisors, and 3 support staff. Currently we have 14 agents (two more of which will be leaving within two weeks, not because they don't like the job, but because of harassment and politics). We only have one supervisor now. This person is rarely available to address our daily concerns. Many of us have questions about the supervisors dedication to the success of the absconder unit. However, we do have 3 outstanding Program Assistants. It should also be noted the current vacant agent positions are on hold by the Region.

5) The amount of Re-absconders referred to our unit is too high. Currently, we have approximately 2,000 active referrals in our unit. Approximately, 500 of these are Re-absconders. The total number of absconders in Milwaukee will never go down if we are looking for the same people 2, 3 and sometimes 4 times. Absconding is not being taken seriously by the Milwaukee Region.

6) Decisions made on policy for the unit are most often made without any consultation with people who actually do the job. A teamwork approach would be more effective in this type of job. Better communication needs to be fostered between labor and management.

7) Regional management has not fostered many relationships with other agencies that would benefit the community and our unit. Based on our experience we have received a lot of support from the community members, but little support from other agencies.

8) We lack outside DOC training and resources that may benefit our



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unit. No one in DOC has ever done our jobs, however, numerous other agencies have been doing this type of work for a long time and we believe they would have a wealth of knowledge and expertise to share with us. We also need computer search programs, similar to the one that the Sex Offender Registration Program has.

9) Absconder unit manual revisions must be made that enhance our ability to do our job, rather than hinder our ability to do our job.

10) Milwaukee Regional Management is currently attempting to address absconder unit hours of operation. Rumor has it that 2nd shift will be abolished. It is our belief that 2nd shift hours are crucial to the operation of our units.

11) EMP (Electronic Monitoring) violations can be addressed by the absconder units, however, it appears we rarely get these referrals in a timely manner and as a high priority. Second shift hours afford a great opportunity to increase community safety in non-traditional hours for those offenders who violate EMP.

12) Although we are not privy to this information, we are concerned that the budget allotted for our units is not being spent entirely on our units. We also do not have a budget for overtime which would be utilized to address the large caseloads we currently have.

13) The removal of the 1st shift supervisor was totally unjustified and unsubstantiated. She was really hurt. She cried a lot. Her heart, experience and talents were dedicated to the success of our unit and development of agents professionalism and expertise.

14) Ultimately, we simply want to do the best job we can to protect the safety of the communities we serve by both holding offenders accountable for their behavior and to allow for treatment options to be successful. As members of this department we feel we are not being taken seriously about our concerns and goals. We are not being respected. Our professional judgement is minimized and our concerns for the communities we serve are not being recognized.

Once again, the issues we are presenting are not all inclusive. We are simply trying to find solutions to challenges we face, but need help from the people who have the power to resolve them. Thanks again for your attention to these matters, we look forward to your response.



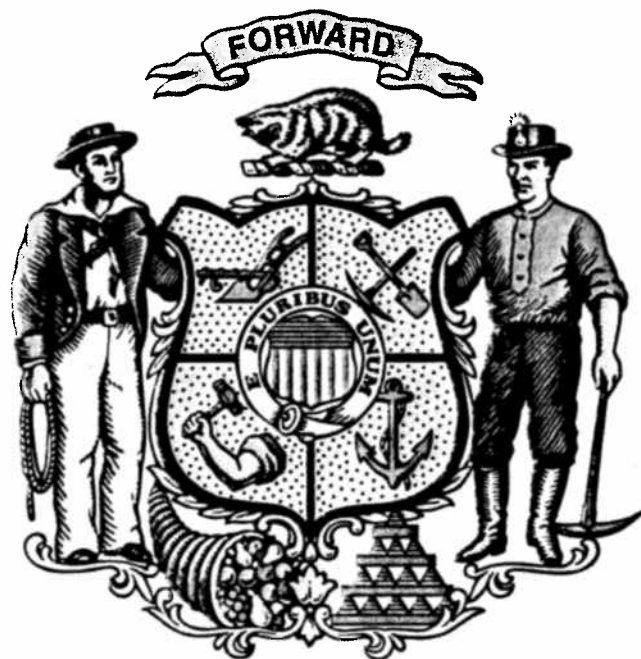
Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2000 5:17 PM
To: Gilbert, Melissa
Subject: Milwaukee Prob. Parole Absconder Unit

Hello Melissa Gilbert. Paul Reif here. Regarding our conversation yesterday, I have come to find out that the positions for our 2nd shift have been posted, meaning agents can now sign up for the shift. It does not contain what the work hours would be nor when they would actually start in the absconder unit. We are hoping that Scott would be able to contact someone regarding the proposed 2nd shift hours of 10:30am to 7pm. We believe based on our experiences in the unit that the hours should be the same as (3:00p to 11:30) or similiar to (2:30p to 11:00p) the previously posted hours. The community benefits greatly when we have to full shifts and we are able to be more efficient ourselves.

I believe these hours were legislatively mandated and could only be changed with the approval of the legislature and/or it's legislative designee. I know previously we had to request a minimum amount of staffing per day be changed because we could not account for days off for agents during the week when agents had to work the weekend in a particular week. We hope this issue can be addressed asap as the positions are already being posted. A more traditional 2nd shift may also entice more seasoned agents and/ or benefit someone who has daycare issues. It would possibly save low payed agents a whole lot of money. Thanks again.

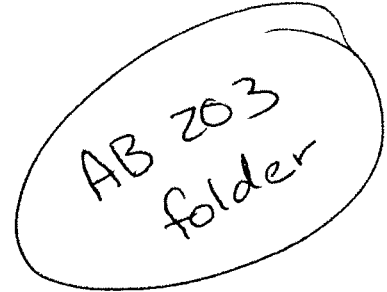
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Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2000 8:39 PM
To: Gilbert, Melissa
Subject: Milwaukee Absconder Unit 2nd Shift change of hours

Paul Reif here. Just an FYI. 2nd shift hours are now 10:30am to 7:00pm. As previously noted and discussed we do not believe these hours will be beneficial to us, for reasons previously mentioned. We just don't have the equipment (vehicles, radios, etc.. for all these people working the same time first shift does) or police availability, and most importantly community safety is jeopardized again. Lastly, we highly doubt the 2nd shift will get many if any experienced agents to work these strange hours. This is going to be a big mess, and once again our suggestions fall on deaf ears. The harassment and sabotage of the Milwaukee absconder unit unfortunately continues. We will not give up though, as we will try to adapt to yet another roadblock to progress because we believe what we are doing is beneficial to the citizens of Milwaukee County and the State.



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Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2000 9:03 PM
To: Gilbert, Melissa
Subject: Re: Milwaukee Absconder Unit 2nd Shift change of hours

OK. Thanks. Several other items on the burner at this time are the abolishment of individual caseloads, pairing agents in male and female teams on purpose, and closing down the unit for two weeks to work specifically on "dead end" cases.

Abolishing individual caseloads will create mass confusion. Management is intending to do this because they believe that grouping cases in a specific area geographically will improve our numbers. There is absolutely no data that supports this.

The only data that we agents are aware of are the facts that only about 25% of absconders are found at their last known address (which is what the geographical grouping would be based on--LKA). Also, we are already working in somewhat of a geographical fashion, which we have attempted to explain to them, but again no one cares to listen to what we are saying.

Another factor that does not help our numbers is that we have numerous re-absconders referred to us. These are offenders we have located at one time in the past and are re-referred again, some cases being in excess of 2 or 3 times. Either these individuals have to be revoked, or sanctioned more cautiously. They simply are not making themselves available for supervision.

The idea of purposely pairing male and female agents has greatly offended all agents in the unit, both male and female. We had conversations about this idea today and several female agents stated that they felt discriminated against regarding the pairings. When we go to work everyday we work with who ever is there if our regular partners are not. This is a very dangerous job and we depend on everyone in the unit for support, not just males or females. We respect each and everyones professional talents no matter who they are, why can't our management?? It appears that this is another attempt to plant seeds of division.

Our management has created a category called dead end cases. These are cases that have exhausted all leads to locate an offender. We then no longer consider the case active unless a new lead comes in. We believe the intention of this category is to "pat" our numbers or closed cases, when in all reality if we had smaller caseloads, like 50 cases, not 150, we would be able to do the necessary legwork on these cases that would result in location of a good number of these so called dead ends. Of course, some cases are not able to be resolved, but this number would be a lot less if we had more time to work on a case. We have offered solutions to this subject as well.

Primarily get us two

Unfortunately, no one in management has prior experience with a unit like the absconder unit, therefore, I believe it's best that they seriously consider our feedback when making a decision. It appears this is not being done, specifically relating to our last two meetings we have had with them. Little if any of our suggestions were implemented, and now they are overhauling the entire units operation, and it makes no sense. We have been successful considering the amount of harassment and little support we have received from our managers. As much adversity as we have faced we could have just as easily thrown in the towel and this would have been another wasted program. Fortunately for us we have a great group of people to work with and want our absconder program to be the best in the country.

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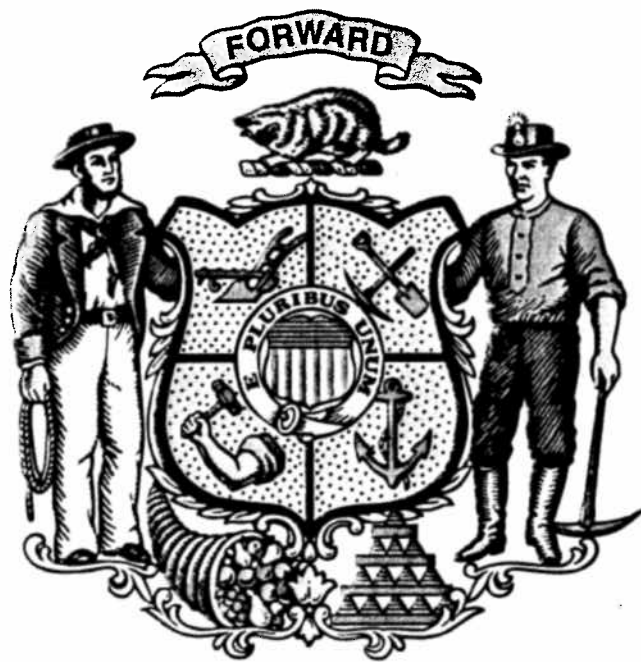


Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, October 03, 2000 10:12 PM
To: Gilbert, Melissa
Subject: Milwaukee Absconder Unit

Paul Reif here. Just wanted to let you know it's getting really bad here again. They are making many changes in how the unit operates. We believe this is being done to harrass us for bringing up the gun issue, and because the issue is nearing again. We are trying to be patient and understanding but our careers and personal lives have been so greatly effected, we don't know how much more we can take without going on the offensive. We will keep you posted. Thank you for your continued efforts in trying to resolve our issues and concerns.

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Gilbert, Melissa

From: Jkeychap@aol.com
Sent: Friday, October 06, 2000 12:48 AM
To: Gilbert, Melissa
Cc: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Subject: Probation/Parole Searches in the Milwaukee Region

Melissa,

I am writing to inform you and Representative Walker about a concern I, and many other Probation/Parole Agents have regarding several issues affecting the Absconder Unit and the Milwaukee Region. My main concern has to do with the current Probation/Parole contraband home search practices in the Milwaukee Region.

On 9-28-00, our unit had a brief meeting with our supervisors, Sandra Bucholtz and Jule Cavanaugh. During this meeting Supervisor Bucholtz informed us that the Milwaukee Regional Chief, John Barian, had told her and Supervisor Cavanaugh that the Absconder Unit would be doing "less searches and less custodies." I don't understand how Mr. Barian can make a blanket statement like that when one of the Absconder Unit's main functions is to apprehend "wanted" Probation and Parole violators (with the idea of protecting the community), and when the decision to conduct contraband searches should be considered on an individual basis depending on the circumstances of the particular situation.

In order to conduct a search of a probationer's or parolee's residence, you must meet very specific criteria which are clearly stated in DOC policy. Although an agent usually gathers the information to determine whether the criteria has been met, it is not the agent's decision as to whether or not the search will be conducted. All of this is in place to protect the rights of the offenders, which is reasonable. However, I believe that in order to protect the community, when there is strong evidence that an offender has drugs or guns in his or her residence and all the criteria has been met to legally conduct a search, that search needs to be done so that the contraband can be taken off the streets. When management states simply that less searches will be done, without looking at the circumstances of a particular case, I feel they are not acting in the best interest of the community. In fact there have been several instances where all of the criteria has been met to do a search, and it was very probable that there were drugs or guns inside of offenders' residences, and management denied the searches for very questionable reasons. My belief about their reasons for doing so, is that they think that our finding drugs and guns in the homes of offenders on active probation or parole makes the DOC look bad to the Milwaukee community.

I further believe that management's reason for having the Absconder Unit do less searches and custodies, is because that by doing our job were are bringing to light an ugly side of probation and parole, which is the fact that numerous offenders on supervision are routinely involving themselves in illegal activity involving guns and drugs. The fact that the offenders we come in contact with have stopped reporting to their agents altogether, makes it even more likely that they are violating their probation or parole in other ways. All of this obviously doesn't make the Division of Community Corrections look very good regarding their "protection of the community." Essentially it's "bad publicity."

Another fact that should be noted, is that for at least the 8 years I've been an agent, the Milwaukee Region has done far less contraband searches than other regions around the state. This could easily be verified by comparing the number of searches conducted in Milwaukee in a year, and the number of searches done in other regions in a year. Where agents in Milwaukee rarely ever do searches of offender's residences, in areas outside of Milwaukee, these searches are routinely conducted. This is interesting, considering the

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highest number of offenders on probation and parole, are on supervision in Milwaukee. Again I believe this has to do with the fact management thinks that allowing agents to conduct home searches would lead to the recovery of a lot of guns and drugs which would make probation and parole look bad to the community.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Kyle Chapman
Probation/Parole Agent
Absconder Unit

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Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2000 10:22 PM
To: Gilbert, Melissa
Subject: Milwaukee Absconder Unit

Hello Melissa. We have recently filed a grievance regarding the use of daily logs in our unit. A daily log is a form on which the agents in the absconder unit record what we are doing throughout the day. For example, 7:00am-7:20am---return phone calls and emails; 10:00 am - 10:10am went to 2222 Friendly Ln. to locate wanted felony probation absconder. etc...

First of all, we are the only agents in the Milwaukee region that have to fill out a daily log. We believe this is unfair. We do not understand why we have to account for everything we do in a day and other agents do not have to do this. We are more than willing to log the times we go to a specific address while we are in the field because it is a point of reference for our notations on a case, however, we don't believe it is necessary to recount what we do in the office everyday. Our office time is very routine. If all other agents were submitting this form we would be willing to do so ourselves because that is fair. We believe we are being singled out as a means of harassment and intimidation.

In the course of this grievance thus far, we are being told by DCC management that we must fill out these daily logs as it is a requirement of the legislature. Is this true? And if it is we would like to see it in writing?

Also, I had an opportunity to scan the articles in the Milw. Journal re: health care issues in DAI facilities. All I can say is that DCC also has issues of this magnitude when it comes to our inability to protect the public when supervising offenders in the community. DCC has taken a stance of non-confrontationalism (if that is a word?) for many years when dealing with offenders. Managers will state that we should disengage from offenders who become agitated or violent, or when someone violates their supervision we should give them additional chances to correct their behavior. On a case by case basis these are definitely options, but to make blanket policies of this nature jeopardize the safety of our communities. Based on my almost 9 years of experience it is clear to me that this passive philosophy is exactly what the criminal wants and thrives on. Criminals prey on the weak. Criminals look for weaknesses when deciding who to victimize, where, and when. Offenders are using the department's philosophies and practices to assist them in victimizing the community. As the articles allude to, the DOC doesn't have anyone from an outside source monitoring their policies and procedures. The DOC has become so powerful it sometimes appears it has no one to answer to or anything to be accountable for. And yes, cover ups are harsh words, but it happens practically everyday. As employees we are brainwashed to not disagree with policies and it is clearly known that if you do you will be "red flagged" and labeled a troublemaker. Just think where this world would be without individuals standing up for what they believed in. Actually people standing up for their rights are what made this country as great as it is today. I apologize for the rhetoric but what has happened with the absconder unit is another clear example of the "death penalty" story. Absconder unit morale is at an all time low due to all the issues previously presented. We just wish someone was in our corner and could walk in our shoes for a day. We will continue to fight though, for a harassment free and safe working environment so that we can continue to provide as much safety to victims and the community as possible.

AB 203
Folder



Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Monday, December 18, 2000 9:29 PM
To: Melissa.Gilbert@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: AB 743

Hello Melissa, Paul Reif here. Hope the holiday season is treating you all well and you all get a deserved rest from the recent elections. Many of us in the absconder unit are extremely happy George W. Bush is our President elect. Many of the police we work with are overjoyed as well.

Just wanted to say thanks for meeting with our management. Some positive things have occurred since the meeting. If there are some issues that are still unclear to you and Mr Walker we would be glad to clarify. We are definitely looking forward to meeting with Scott and yourself very soon after the 1st of the year to discuss AB 743. I apologize for not keeping in touch earlier, however, I felt the election kept you all quite busy. The changes in our unit kept all of us quite busy as well. Please forward some dates that would be good for Scott after the 1st of the year. We have a bunch of new info to forward to you and we will do so prior to the beginning of the new year. Happy holidays to you, Scott, and the rest of your staff.

AB 203
folder



Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Monday, January 08, 2001 10:15 PM
To: Melissa.Gilbert@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Re: AB 743

AB 203
folder

Hello Melissa, Paul Reif here. On 12-19-00 you were inquiring as to what improvements we have seen in the absconder unit as of late. I spoke with several agents in our unit and we came up with the fact that there are now seven agents on 2nd shift, 5 of which are full-time and two of which are pool coded. As a result of the additional staff we received 2 additional vehicles. I can't speak for the second shift supervisor, as I don't have that much contact with her, however, our first shift supervisor listens to our concerns and appears to be adapting quite well to her new unit. The rest is status quo I guess. The new zone concept has some good things and bad things in it. We are also concerned that our closed case data is somewhat misconstrued as we are now closing out (called a "dead end case") cases even though we have not found the absconder. This makes our numbers look better, but it's not necessarily objective data.

Several major policy changes would definitely help us though. We continue to leave absconders in residences because of our search policies. We believe we should have more access to an offenders last known address and those addresses in which we have reliable information that the offender is there. One idea would be to have the head of a parolees or probationers residence sign a waiver that says if this particular offender violates their supervision by absconding or committing a new crime their residence will be searched for the " body " only. This policy would not apply to a contraband search.

Secondly, and this relates to the arming of our unit, perhaps, the absconder units, and other higher risk units (i.e. the high risk, sex offender, and parole/e.s. units) be molded into a new Division. For example, the Division of Specialized Supervision and Absconder Apprehension. In actuality all of these units should be armed. Personally, I believe there should be some type of absconder unit in each region of Probation and Parole and perhaps that alone is enough to create a new division. Perhaps the whole firearm issue would be easier for DCC to handle then.

Lastly, and most importantly is the arming of our units. We continue to talk to DOC's around the country and they are just blown away when they find out we are not armed, just as almost every person we ever talk to is. When someone asks us what we do for a living, the second question is always what type of firearm do we carry. A lot of people are concerned for our safety, we just wish our employer was more concerned. We simply need a firearm for self defense and deterrence.

Sorry it took me so long to get back to you but I've been doing a little home improvement and it's taking time from focusing on the firearms issue. I think I'm a little caught up now though and myself and other members of our unit are eager to meet with Rep. Walker and yourself as soon as possible. Talk to you soon.



Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Friday, January 26, 2001 4:26 PM
To: Melissa.Gilbert@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Milw absconder unit

Hello Melissa Gilbert, Paul Reif here. Just an FYI. We have not had police back up since Monday Jan. 22 2001 and we are not expected to have the officers we work with back until mid February. We are being told that MPD is extremely short staffed and needed our officers to work with their warrant unit for awhile. Many MPD officers are retiring and leaving Milw PD. for other reasons. As it relates to the firearms issue it is clear that we will not always be able to rely on MPD for back up. MPD is not always available to us as most people might assume.

We would also like an update on the status of the firearms bill. Thanks.

AB 203
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Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2001 10:10 PM
To: Melissa.Gilbert@legis.state.wi.us
Subject: Re: Milw absconder unit

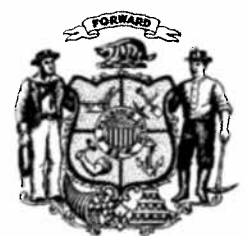
Hello Melissa, Paul Reif here. Just got home, quite a long day today, about 14 hrs. We went to a house to apprehend an absconder. Turned out to be a dope house. Sure could have used our MPD officers. We'll send an incident report on it. Get's a little scary when you don't have back up and your not armed. Thankfully, we had everything under control.

We can meet on a Monday. Preferably late afternoon, early eve. Place is quite optional. We would like to review draft and briefly discuss a few other general issues. Does not look good that MPD officers will return to us, however, they are meeting on it on Friday (2-2-01) and we should know then. Today we again had conversations with a number of different agencies and it is unfortunate to hear that DOC-DCC does not have a very good reputation. They like what we are doing though and we try to build positive relationships with other line staff from other agencies. If only our management could do the same by making policies that hold offenders accountable for their behavior and allow more staff to network with other agencies. I like to hope and believe that they are attempting to improve in these areas. Talk to you soon.

AB 203
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WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Gilbert, Melissa

From: REIFPACKFAN@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, August 14, 2001 12:36 AM
To: Gilbert, Melissa
Subject: Milwaukee Probation and Parole Absconder Unit

AB 203
folder

Hello Melissa, Paul Reif here. Hope things are going well for all of you regarding the state budget. I can't even imagine how difficult it is to get issues resolved. Well, on my end my wife and I had a baby boy 9lbs 2oz. 21 in. on June 7, so I guess I've been a little busy myself. We also have a two year old daughter as well. We are so grateful and blessed to have healthy, wonderful children. Hopefully one day they will both be wearing Badger uniforms as well. Ha Ha.

I guess myself and fellow agents in the absconder unit are ready to "step back in the ring" so to speak regarding AB 203 and absconder unit issues.

Unfortunately, the absconder unit has lost the core of the Milwaukee Police officers that worked with us for the better part of 3 years. It's really hit us hard but we are moving on as best we can. Officers Fred Jones, John Weismueller, Sue Becker and Ken Smith should be highly commended for their service to the DOC and for literally training us "on the job" in an outstanding professional manner. Fred Jones was lost to hip surgery, John Weismueller and Sue Becker transferred to a Monday thru Friday job in the Vice Control Division and Ken Smith was promoted to detective. If people only knew what outstanding people these individuals are. They all expressed how difficult it was to make their moves because they really enjoyed working with us. Actually, Kenny Smith wanted to testify for us regarding AB 203 and sought permission to do so, but we didn't want to put him in hot water with his chief. We now have little to no police support. We have 3 officers assigned to us, but due to day off schedules, other police work they have to do, vacations, etc... we rarely have two officers an average of three days a week. It's been like this since about the middle of May-late May. I guess it doesn't help MPD to be short 200 to 300 officers short either.

As you probably know there have been big time gang/drug wars this summer in Milwaukee, and of course we had this Murder Mob running around killing people left and right. And of course some of the people were killed by people on probation and parole. This brings me to my first current concern.

We no longer work on all absconder cases. Our regional office now screens some absconder cases before they can come to our unit. Mainly these are cases that are deemed " too dangerous " for us to work on because we are not armed. Of course we worked on these types of cases before the gun issue became more of a heated issue. We apprehended a good number of these " dangerous individuals" with the help of our officers I might add.

In the past we have taken some weapons and drugs off the streets. Now I couldn't even tell you the last time I did a search for drugs or weapons. It's probably because we don't get those types of cases anymore. I believe there are assaultive cases/drug cases that are not being worked on because we have limited police access now and our management does not want us to have any " incidents " that relate or support the need for firearms. It is also imperative that someone check into the number of absconders currently active in our region with the number of absconders actually referred to our unit. I think you will find a significant difference. I also believe that perhaps there needs to be an investigation into the management of the absconder unit from day one. Basically, how we have had to overcome obstacle after obstacle to achieve the main goal of this unit, that being a reduction of the number of absconders in region 3 and protection of the community from probation and parole violators.

Here are some examples since the beginning of this year. One day I received 4 misdemeanor cases and one non-assaultive felony case when in fact there were more assaultive cases that the community needed to be protected from. Early on in our units history we mainly focused on the most assaultive cases, those that placed the communities safety in jeopardy. I don't believe that's the units current focus.

We purchased probably \$20,000 dollars in radio equipment. We requested to have one channel that was directly to MPD city dispatch for our safety needs in case we were in a real bad situation and needed immediate back up or assistance. To date there are complications with getting all agents this channel.

At times we lose the police for several weeks/2 weeks/ 1 week. One day when they returned we had four custodies in an hour to an hour and a half of their return.

One day we are told someone from regional office is on call because our sups are gone. We try to page them for a search request and our page is never returned. Our decisions in the field have to be made perfectly

and in
a short period of time.

On another occasion when we have thousands of absconders to look for I receive 5 cases, two are unemployment fraud cases. Not that each case is not important, but we also have to consider the potential threat to the community.

Myself and another agent are reprimanded for missing a managerial meeting, when in fact we were in the middle of doing a custody in the field.

We have continually been short vehicles. We told management that overlapping the shifts would result in equipment shortages. As of late this situation is resolving itself as we have more vehicles, but it didn't help us since the inception of the overlapping shifts about a year ago.

A wanted felony vop, with a first degree homicide warrant was never referred to our unit. A SBN case was not distributed to abscond unit in a timely fashion.

On another occasion our Sup re-affirms the fact that Regional office is screening some cases before they are coming to abscond unit.

One day a mother of an offender stated that she was praying the previous night that the absconder unit would apprehend her son as he had a real bad drug problem and needed to be placed in custody so he could get the help he needed. We apprehended him at her house that morning.

Our current sup stated that when she took over as sup of our unit all historical documents regarding this unit were either lost or destroyed.

Another day there were several shootings w/ in minutes of myself and my partner leaving the area of N. 23 and Chambers.

On another occasion a member of the Regional staff was overheard by an agent in our office stating " It's shit like this." (pointing to wanted picture notices we have hanging in our office for all to see so that if we see them on the street we can notify someone-- they are wanted for serious offenses) " Who the f.... do they think they are." " What do they need this for. "

Regarding the high profile case in Mequon. One individual who was allegedly involved in the homicide, who was on paper, and allegedly admitted to two other homicides was referred to the absconder unit but we were not allowed to actively seek this offender per our regional office. (He may have actually been referred prior to anyone having knowledge of his involvement, but I'm not 100% sure of that).

More examples of offender's referred to our unit but we were not allowed to actively search for them:

Felon, two time absconder, killed his girlfriend

Felon, on paper for First degree sex assault and false imprisonment,

were not allowed to look for this offender per regional office.

Six other cases with dangerous histories and possible felony warrants

similar to previous cases

. * Now if MPD or another agency called DOC and said don't work on these cases because it would interfere with their investigation then that is perhaps a legitimate reason to not work on these cases. That I do not know.

These are just a few examples (there are many more) of why we can't function to our fullest potential and why we should be armed for purposes of self defense and deterrence if in fact we would encounter one of these individuals with a weapon. Some of these examples have been brought to me second hand, via other agents, and specific details of a particular case are not available to me, but I trust what I'm being told is accurate.

Now I'm sure myself and the absconder unit will face retaliation for this being sent to you. Actually I prefer you not share this with them, but investigate some of this stuff for yourselves and perhaps some of these issues can be addressed. I don't blame any one person for any of this as I'm sure most of it is probably systemic. But, how will any of these issues get resolved if no one talks about them or questions why we conduct business the way we do.

I discussed some of these issues with my supervisor today in my supervisory conference. She then asked in more or less words why I bring all of this on myself. For one I am concerned about my personal safety and the safety of my co-workers. I am also concerned even more so that daddy is safe at work and that he comes home, plays with his children, and spends quality time with his wife. Lastly, I want the absconder unit in Wisconsin to be one of the best in the country. It's important to all of us in the absconder unit that the people under supervision by the DOC and the state are not continually victimizing the communities we work and live in.

We hope AB 203 moves on with great fervor as many of these issues would most likely be resolved with the arming of the absconder unit. I'll keep in touch, please share this with Scott and thanks again to all of you for your attention to our concerns.