

# State of Wisconsin

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## Joint Committee on Finance

### MEMORANDUM

To: Members  
Joint Committee on Finance

From: Senator Alberta Darling  
Representative John Nygren

Date: September 4, 2018

Re: 14-Day Passive Review Approval – DOJ

Pursuant to s. 165.10, Stats., attached is a 14-day passive review request from the Department of Justice, received on September 4, 2018.

Please review the material and notify **Senator Darling** or **Representative Nygren** no later than **Friday, September 21, 2018**, if you have any concerns about the request or if you would like the Committee to meet formally to consider it.

Also, please contact us if you need further information.

Attachments

AD:JN:jm



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Deputy Attorney General

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August 30, 2018

VIA INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAIL and EMAIL

The Honorable Alberta Darling  
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance  
Room 317 East, State Capitol  
( [Alberta.Darling@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Alberta.Darling@legis.wisconsin.gov) )

The Honorable John Nygren  
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance  
Room 309 East, State Capitol  
( [John.Nygren@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:John.Nygren@legis.wisconsin.gov) )

Re: Discretionary Request – suicide prevention and mental health awareness campaign

Dear Senator Darling and Representative Nygren:

Due to the growth of the public concern over mental health awareness and treatment options, I propose the use of discretionary money to directly address three specific areas in which Wisconsin citizens have most strongly voiced concerns to me.

First, there is an immediate need to address the alarming rate of law enforcement officer suicides in our state. In the last 19 months, 12 officers have lost their lives to suicide in Wisconsin. That is far more than we lose to duty-related deaths. Whether the number of officer suicides is due to public misconceptions of law enforcement, the social and job pressures of a career in service, or cultural pressures within the law enforcement community, this trend cannot be ignored.

Accordingly, the Department of Justice (DOJ) seeks authorization to use \$180,000 to fund a suicide prevention campaign directed at law enforcement and other criminal justice professionals, as well as their families. A breakdown of the funding is provided on the enclosed spreadsheet (Attachment A). Our intent is to expend the attached budget over the next two years. Also enclosed is a list of goals for this program created by a multi-jurisdictional team of law enforcement professionals (Attachment B).

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Additionally, DOJ seeks to use \$20,000 to continue funding the Law Enforcement Chaplains Program that was established in July 2018. The funds will be used to provide training, mileage, and safety equipment to volunteer chaplains. Those volunteer chaplains respond to emergency events to provide support, both on-scene and post-event, to law enforcement and law enforcement families.

It is DOJ's hope to eliminate the loss of any more Wisconsin law enforcement officers to suicide through long term outreach, communications, education, and peer support. We also realize the need to move quickly with this initiative and get help to those currently suffering.

Second, DOJ recognizes that the mental health of our school-aged children is of paramount importance to the success of Wisconsin as a state. For example, within the \$100 million school safety grant program, I have ensured that all teachers in Wisconsin are trained on trauma informed care (TIC) and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Additionally, the DOJ is offering a robust training program for approximately 7,500 teachers and counselors on advanced mental health topics related to adolescence.

To complement this significant effort to train our teachers and counselors, DOJ seeks to use approximately \$200,000 to fund a research project related to the effectiveness of different programs on mental health and the impact of those programs on negative outcomes, such as violence, suicide, threats, discipline, absences, and the like. DOJ would like to work collaboratively with one of the Wisconsin colleges or universities to perform one or more small-scale pilot programs, and then study the results of those programs to evaluate their effectiveness. Those studies would be used to inform future investments and programs in the area of mental health in our schools. The ultimate goal of these studies would be to create an evidence-based, cost-effective, and scalable "mental health wellness" mentorship program for any school in Wisconsin.

A similar collaborative approach was recently taken by the University of Chicago Crime Lab, and Chicago Public Schools. The results of that collaboration provided valuable, research-based insight into how to address youth violence within Chicago schools. We acknowledge that the broader topic of mental health in Wisconsin is different than Chicago's specific violence reduction study; and that Chicago schools face different environmental factors than most Wisconsin schools. Therefore, we would like to fund a research project specific to our state schools; use the results to determine the most effective methods to positively impact mental

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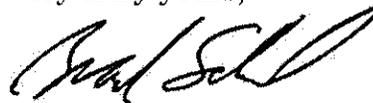
health in Wisconsin schools; and create a "mental health wellness" mentorship program for them.

Finally, during my recent visits to each of the 72 Wisconsin counties, I received significant feedback related to the civil commitment process and the impact it is having on local law enforcement resources. One concern consistently raised is the inability of law enforcement officers to determine, themselves, whether an individual is eligible for involuntary civil commitment. The officer is often forced to wait, often times on scene, for a social services professional to make that decision before the officer may transport the individual to the appropriate facility. Both the wait and the transport require significant resources, which is especially impactful on the many small law enforcement agencies within our state.

DOJ seeks to use the remaining, unallocated discretionary funds of approximately \$44,000 to establish training standards and protocols focused on crisis intervention, and recognizing the signs of mental illness within the context of the many different situations our officers face. The development of these training standards and protocols will include exploring the possibility of a certification process. Having this certification will allow officers to better respond to individuals in crisis, prevent escalation, and ensure officers are well-equipped to assist in commitment determinations.

DOJ is committed to using our discretionary resources to help address mental health concerns raised by our citizens. The three specific areas I have proposed will provide an integrated approach to reduce or eliminate the unnecessary pain and suffering of our state's citizens due to the lack mental health awareness and treatment options. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of these initiatives.

Very truly yours,



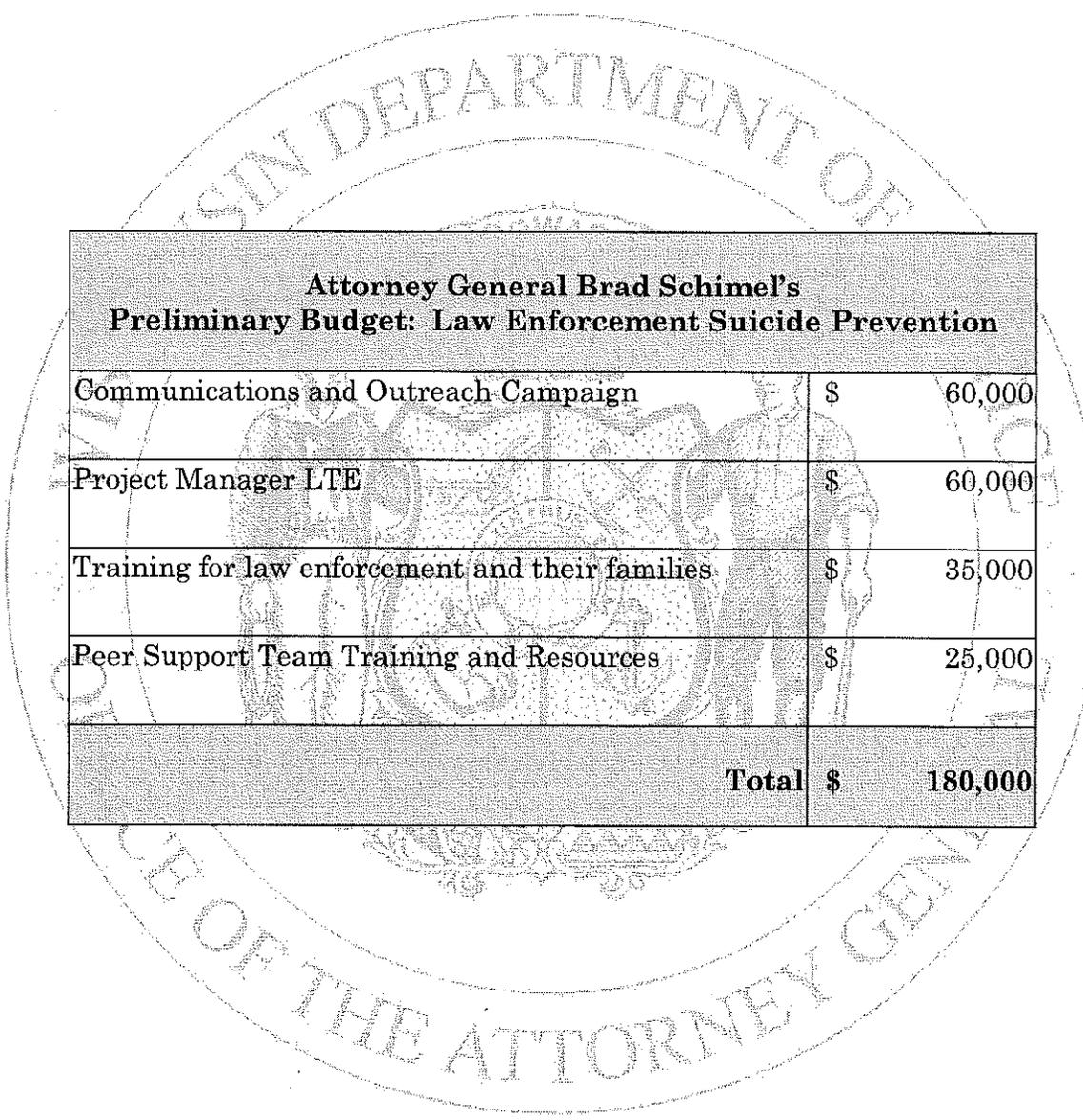
Brad D. Schimel  
Wisconsin Attorney General

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Enclosures

Senator Darling  
Representative Nygren  
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Attachment A

Attorney General Brad Schimel's  
Preliminary Budget: Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention



<b>Attorney General Brad Schimel's Preliminary Budget: Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention</b>	
Communications and Outreach Campaign	\$ 60,000
Project Manager LTE	\$ 60,000
Training for law enforcement and their families	\$ 35,000
Peer Support Team Training and Resources	\$ 25,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 180,000</b>

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Attachment B

Attorney General Brad Schimel's  
Proposed goals of Department of Justice (DOJ):  
Law Enforcement Suicide Prevention

1. Create open programs within law enforcement agencies, that remove the stigma of mental health issues and create an open dialogue so members can comfortably go to their chiefs or peers for assistance
2. Create a "best practices" model and checklist for a healthy culture of openness, that includes peer support teams, therapists for departments or region/Employee Assistance Programs, and chaplain programs
3. Discuss potential laws related to confidentiality for law enforcement peer support communications, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). DOJ Division of Law Enforcement Services (DLES) will work with DOJ Special Counsel Lane Ruhland
4. Create an assessment tool for law enforcement administrators so they can gauge wellness and resiliency programs within their agencies
5. Pull together a statewide resources list and make it available to all Wisconsin law enforcement agencies
6. Hold an October 2018 "Trauma Symposium with Joe Collins and Bill Mazur" event in Milwaukee
7. Add suicide awareness, wellness, and resiliency to the DOJ Executive training series for law enforcement
8. Create regional peer support teams, and establish training (determine appropriate training program) within DOJ
9. Build cumulative stress resiliency within a holistic approach to the elements of wellness including: physical, financial, social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and environmental
10. Have DOJ DLES Justice Programs team look for grant funding possibilities