



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Corrections

FROM: Kyle Christianson, Director of Government Affairs

DATE: January 9, 2018

SUBJECT: Support of Assembly Bill 676

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) supports Assembly Bill 676 (AB 676), which classifies county jailers as protective occupation participants under the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) and mandates that employees pay the enhanced WRS contributions resulting from the classification. AB 676 represents a negotiated compromise between WCA, the Badger State Sheriffs Association, and the Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association that addresses the desires of county jailers without forcing additional costs on to county property taxpayers.

In recent years, negotiations have been ongoing between WCA and the law enforcement community regarding protective status for county jailers. The negotiations followed years of litigation regarding protective status for jailers. Counties were successful in the litigation as the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) found that county jailers are not entitled to WRS protective status because a jailer's job is not considered "active law enforcement" under the law.

Through discussions with law enforcement associations, AB 676 was drafted which provides protective status to jailers without regard to their "active law enforcement" status and, therefore, allows jailers to receive duty disability insurance and early retirement. The legislation also clarifies that jailers are not designated as public safety employees for collective bargaining purposes (*i.e.*, they are general municipal employees and may bargain only over base wages) and jailers are responsible for all—employee and employer—additional WRS contributions.

County jailers are critical to ensuring safety in the jail for inmates, staff, and the general public. As such, AB 676 provides jailers with the additional benefits they desire while protecting local property taxpayers. It is anticipated that this legislation will bring an end to all litigation surrounding jailer protective status, thus providing legal certainty for all 71 counties with county jailers.

WCA respectfully requests that the Committee support AB 676.

Please feel free to contact WCA if you need additional information.