



For Immediate Release
May 17, 2017

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Rep. Taylor Announces Safe Communities Package
Legislation aimed at making law enforcement and community members safer

MADISON – Today, Rep. Taylor (D-Madison) joined legislative colleagues and community leaders to circulate legislation regarding law enforcement use of force principles, aimed at reducing incidents of officer-involved deaths and increasing safety for everyone in the community, including law enforcement.

Currently, law enforcement agencies are required to have a written policy on when force is used, but very little guidance is given about what should be in that policy. All of the policy recommendations incorporated in the legislation come directly from law enforcement professionals, including both individual officers and national groups and taskforces that have studied policing issues. Additionally, the Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) has indicated these principles are entirely consistent with the way law enforcement officers are trained.

A piece of the package would require a law enforcement agency's use of force policy to incorporate that the primary duty of law enforcement is to preserve the life of all individuals, that deadly force should be used as a last resort, that officers should use skills and tactics that minimize the likelihood that force will become necessary, that if officers must use physical force, it should be the least amount of force necessary to safely address the threat, and that officers must intervene if they witness a colleague using excessive force.

"Adopting more specific use of force standards makes everyone safer," said Rep. Taylor. "Departments around the country have seen quantitative success in reducing officer injury, the use of force, and officer-involved deaths. Having these principles, which are consistent with the way officers are trained, in a written policy, is important so that the community can see these critical pieces are an expectation."

Other pieces of the package specify that at least 8 of the annual 24 hour officer training requirement focus on use of force options, emphasizing de-escalation. Additionally, the package directs the LESB to establish a model use of force policy addressing interactions with the mentally ill and other vulnerable populations. Finally, the package requires that a law enforcement agency's written use of force policy be published online to increase transparency and accessibility.

"These are common-sense reforms that communities and law enforcement can agree upon to enhance the safety of everyone in the community," said Rep. Taylor. "It's time to move forward together."

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