

Response from Mark Scheffler (D), Candidate for Wisconsin State Senate

Candidate's replies are in bolded red.

Thanks so much for offering to complete this questionnaire. If you could return the answers by the end of June or sooner, that would be fantastic. Please let me know if you need additional time or have additional questions.

For the Blue Policing Questionnaire

Increasing violence towards police officers

Police officers are increasingly being slaughtered on American streets for the simple act of wearing a uniform and badge. Ambush-style attacks on cops were on the [U.S. Department of Justice's radar in 2015](#). And in 2021 alone, there was [a 115% increase in these deliberate and calculated acts](#) over the previous year, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) recently reported. The trend has continued into 2022.

To address the upswing in attacks and ambushes on police officers, the State of Florida passed The [Combatting Violence, Disorder and Looting and Law Enforcement Protection Act](#) in 2020. It makes striking a police officer during a violent or disorderly assembly punishable with a mandatory six-month jail sentence.

Questions. If possible, please explain your answers.

1. If elected as senator, would you be willing to sponsor or co-sponsor similar legislation in the state of Wisconsin?
2. If elected, would you sign this type of legislation if it came up for a vote?

[Additional information about this topic](#)

Police staffing shortages

In one [nationwide survey](#) to determine the prevalence of police staffing shortages, the Police Executive Research Forum found that on average, departments are filling about 93% of their available positions; and an International Association of Chiefs of Police [survey](#) found that 78% of police departments had difficulty recruiting qualified candidates. These numbers are being outpaced by an approximate 45% increase in police retirements and 18% increase in resignations. The fallout from this includes longer wait times for service, less time for proactive & community policing, and officer burnout.

Question. If possible, please explain your answer.

1. If elected, what initiatives would you take to increase officer application pools and retention?

[Additional information about this topic](#)

Paula –

Thank you so much for reaching out to me about this important topic. Since I entered the race for Wisconsin State Senate more than 9 months ago, I've published a list of my priorities for our State under three broad areas of sustainability: economic, social, and environmental. The issue of supporting police officers is important to me because my brother served in law enforcement for 30 years both as a sheriff's deputy and a corrections officer.

You can view my public statement of support for first responders and professional law enforcement here: <https://mark4wisenate.com/future/> which reads:

"Mark supports the responsible funding of democratically commanded and controlled law enforcement and first responders. He supports affirmative hiring practices to ensure that Wisconsin's communities of color are represented at all levels of law enforcement, and that all communities be actively engaged in police oversight. He believes that public security is a universal right, that prison reform is long overdue, that both law enforcement and the public deserve to be safe, and that violations of the public trust should be vigorously prosecuted."

Specific to your questionnaire, I support a well-ordered society in which democratically commanded-and-controlled law enforcement play an integral role. Section 940.20(47)(a) of the Wisconsin Penal Code already provides specific protections to law enforcement by stating: "Whoever intentionally causes bodily harm to a public officer in order to influence the action of such officer or as a result of any action taken within an official capacity, without the consent of the person injured, is guilty of a Class I felony." Our statute also provides for more severe penalties than stated in your questionnaire, with penalties "up to 3 ½ years in state prison, fines up to \$10,000, or both." It would seem that additional legislation in our state is unnecessary.

As so many of my conservative constituents are aware, we must strive to eliminate unnecessary legislation that is duplicative of current legislation. So while I support democratically commanded-and-controlled law enforcement wholeheartedly, I would not support additional legislation that duplicates existing Wisconsin statutes.

In regard to your second question and as stated above, I fully support efforts to responsibly fund first responders and law enforcement. I've spoken with police chiefs, fire chiefs and sheriffs in my district and they ALL tell me that budget freezes implemented by former Republican Governor Scott Walker, Assembly and Senate Republicans in 2011 (Act 10) have been devastating to hiring qualified law

enforcement officers, has been detrimental to morale, and have made it more difficult to convince qualified young people to pursue careers in police science. This is unfortunate, and because I consider myself to be fiscally responsible, I fully support bringing both pay and benefits for law enforcement up to inflation-adjusted 2011 levels. This would mean significant pay increases for first responders and law enforcement, would help attract young people to these important careers, and immediately improve morale and their respective standing in our communities.

And as mentioned above, I fully support efforts to recruit citizens from historically under-represented communities to law enforcement careers. I believe that policing reforms are critically important, and that the best place to start is in our community hiring practices.

As a proud progressive, I fully support democratic institutions, including especially our law enforcement and first responder professionals. I know firsthand that they have a sometimes seemingly impossible responsibility to keep us all safe from lawlessness, crime and from vigilantism. Failing to support law enforcement creates a vacuum that some in our communities feel should be filled with citizen policing (militias such as the “Kenosha Guard” and “The Oathkeepers,” for example) which I see as a grave mistake. And while policing reforms are absolutely necessary and violations of the public trust by law enforcement should be vigorously prosecuted, a well-ordered and well-compensated law enforcement community are essential in a civil society.

Thank you for reaching out to me, and I welcome the opportunity to earn your non-financial support in my candidacy for Wisconsin State Senate. If you require further clarification on this or any other issue, please let me know.

Separate email from me:

Thanks so much for the reply. One more question if you don't mind.

The riots that occurred during the summer of 2020 resulted in ambushes on police officers, burned cities, destroyed businesses, and injured civilians. Does Mark disavow this, and if it were to happen again, what would be his response? It goes without saying that the events of January 6 were also unacceptable, and thus are being prosecuted.

Paula –

Thanks for your additional question.

Civil disobedience and peaceful demonstrations are protected by the 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, but when those actions turn violent (as they recently did in Kenosha, Washington D.C., Charlottesville, etc.) they should be universally condemned. I believe that all forms of lawlessness are unacceptable and should be investigated and prosecuted as appropriate through our civil justice departments. This applies equally to members of the general public and to members of law enforcement who violate the public trust. In a functioning democracy, physical violence and intimidation are unacceptable, looting is unacceptable, and coordinated and/or spontaneous attacks

on law enforcement (as occurred on January 6th) should rightly be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

My reply and final question. Did not receive reply.

Thanks, Mark.

I see you mentioned Kenosha, DC, and Charlottesville. Do you also condemn violent acts committed in Seattle, Portland, New York City, and Madison during the riots of 2020? Police officers were ambushed, federal buildings were set on fire, civilians attacked. Here in Madison, our entire downtown was destroyed, a public building set ablaze, and a police car torched. It was demoralizing for police officers and civilians lost their businesses.

I believe we need to reach a point in this country where we are intolerant of violence regardless of which political ideology it originates from.