

Response from Jesse James (R), Candidate for Wisconsin State Senate

Candidate's replies are in bolded red.

For the Blue Policing Questionnaire

Just for your information I am currently serving as a police officer and have over 20 years of law enforcement experience. I was the police and fire chief for the City of Altoona, and serve as a part-time officer for the Village of Cadott currently. I am the only active law enforcement officer in our Wisconsin state legislature currently. I will never support getting rid of qualified immunity as proposed by our governor and attorney general. I will always support and #BACKTHEBADGE.

The answers to your questions below are attached. I am only seeing three questions, is that all? I want to make sure I didn't miss a link to a survey or something like this. Thank you for backing the blue. I greatly appreciate the support.

Jesse James

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? **I would be honored to do so. I believe similar legislation was introduced, passed, and vetoed by our governor recently.**
2. If elected, would you sign this type of legislation if it came up for a vote? **Absolutely.**

[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?

We had a whole package of law enforcement bills to support our cops. I introduced legislation AB 836 to provide ARPA dollars to allow police academies within our technical college system to offer part-time opportunities for those who may be non-traditional students. This would have allowed night or possibly weekend classes to those who have 60 college credits, and would like to take the 720 hour police academy but can't do it M-F 8-5 PM. This passed and the Governor did not take action on this legislation and went ahead and did it himself as my Democrat colleagues said they did not support it because of the use of ARPA dollars. However the Governor did it and used ARPA dollars himself.

We had a whole package of bills to look at ways to recruit, retain, train, educate, and keep our law enforcement officers here in Wisconsin. This included AB 831; a marketing campaign, titled the "Pro-Cop Wisconsin Campaign," that is designed to recruit law enforcement officers to and retain law enforcement officers in Wisconsin, including the recruitment of law enforcement officers from communities in other states that have sought to reduce funding for law enforcement. WEDC and DOJ must spend \$1,000,000 on the marketing campaign and must consult with local law enforcement agencies and associations in Wisconsin for purposes of the campaign.

AB 832 was a bill to help agencies with training expenses, and annual recertification costs. This would have helped agencies with their annual expenses in hiring, training, tuition, living, and travel expenses. This ultimately would have helped agencies save money and allocate funds to another line item in the budget like part-time officer pay.

AB 833 was a bill where a grant program administered by the Department of Justice would have provided funding to local law enforcement agencies to provide required medical testing and certain supplies to part-time law enforcement officers.

AB 835 This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to waive fees for state park admission, camping, and certain fishing and hunting approvals for a person who is a law enforcement officer with a law enforcement agency in this state. The waivers do not apply after July 1, 2023.

AB 837 This bill creates a grant program administered by the Department of Justice to provide a signing bonus to law enforcement officers who have not previously served as a law enforcement officer in Wisconsin. Under the bill, a new recruit receives \$5,000 as a signing bonus, plus an additional \$1,000 per year of prior out-of-state law enforcement experience, but the bill caps the total amount of a bonus at \$10,000. Under the bill, a law enforcement officer who receives a bonus through this grant program is required to complete three continuous years of employment as a law enforcement officer in this state. The bill also provides for bonus payments to law enforcement officers. Under the bill, each person in charge of a law enforcement agency must certify to DOJ the number of full-time officers employed by the agency that will have at least one year of employment as an officer with the agency by December 31, 2022. No later than December 31, 2022, DOJ must award a grant to each agency in an amount equal to the number of officers certified by the agency multiplied by \$1,000. The law enforcement agencies must then pay bonuses of \$2,000 to qualifying officers as soon as practicable after receiving the grant payments from DOJ.

I was blessed to be one of the leads on this bill package and was a member at the table to discuss what we could do for our law enforcement partners across the state of Wisconsin. I am honored, blessed, and privileged to wear the badge. Thank you again for your support. God Bless.