



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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September 09, 2015

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## Lawmakers Introduce Juvenile Justice Bill

**Madison, WI...** Today, Senator Jerry Petrowski (*R-Marathon*), Representative Rob Hutton (*R-Brookfield*), and Representative Mary Czaja (*R-Irma*) circulated a bill aimed at helping to reduce crime, recidivism and cost to taxpayers by returning **non-violent**, first-time 17 year old offenders back to the juvenile justice system.

“Wisconsin is one of only 9 states that still prosecutes all 17 year olds as adults,” says Senator Petrowski. “Young people with adult criminal records are less likely to graduate from high school, they have difficulty finding future employment, and face barriers to higher education and military service. The kids we’re talking about are non-violent and are having their first brush with the legal system and they deserve a second chance to become responsible adults.”

Under this bill, first time, non-violent 17 year olds would have their cases filed in the juvenile system as opposed to adult court. However, violent and repeat offenders would remain under the jurisdiction of the adult court and under this bill the judge would still retain the discretion to waive the offender to the adult criminal system on a case-by-case basis.

“Coinciding with national research, we believe the juvenile justice system in Wisconsin is better equipped to administer punishment and align life transforming accountability to this specific population of 17 year olds,” said Rep Hutton. “This legislation is about reducing the rate of juvenile recidivism leading to stronger families and safer communities.”

The bill is expected to be introduced in both the State Senate and Assembly following the conclusion of the co-sponsorship period on September 15<sup>th</sup>.