



STATE SENATOR PAT KREITLOW

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 2009

CONTACT: Pat Kreitlow
(608)266-7511

State Senate Passes Kreitlow Bill Protecting Corrections Officers *'John Doe' Reform Legislation Passes with Broad Bi-Partisan Support*

MADISON – The State Senate today passed legislation that would protect corrections officers from frivolous lawsuits and investigations brought about by complaints from prison inmates. The bill was authored by Senator Pat Kreitlow (D-Chippewa Falls), at the request of corrections officers working in the Chippewa Valley.

“Today the State Senate took a major step forward in protecting our corrections officers from facing unwarranted investigations and lawsuits” said Kreitlow. “It’s clear to everyone that our current system of handling these ‘John Doe’ complaints is much too susceptible to fraud and puts our corrections officers at risk every day. Our bill addresses these problems by creating a fair and thorough system that will guarantee that only those cases with merit are moved forward, keeping baseless complaints from becoming frivolous lawsuits in the process.”

The bill improves what is known as the ‘John Doe’ process, which allows a complaint to be filed anonymously, by formalizing how a complaint is reviewed by both a district attorney and a circuit court judge. It provides strict guidelines on how cases are reviewed in deciding whether formal criminal charges should be filed against a corrections officer. The legislation has been endorsed by both advocates for inmates’ rights and those for corrections officers.

“I want to thank my colleagues in the Senate for their support of this important bill today,” added Kreitlow. “I am confident that our colleagues in the Assembly will move quickly to pass this legislation, putting an end to years of the needless investments and expensive lawsuits that have become common practice in our corrections system.”

####