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PUBLIC DEFENDERS**

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MADISON, Wis. – Wisconsin State Public Defender Jennifer Bias issued the following statement in response to the introduction of LRB-0779, a bill proposed by Wisconsin state legislators that would require sheriffs to act on behalf of ICE:

“This legislation is an attack on the individual liberties of thousands of Wisconsin residents who have chosen to pursue a better life and make this state their home. The people that this legislation targets are entitled to the same level of constitutional protection as US-born citizens. As public defenders, we are committed to fearlessly advocating for the most vulnerable members of our communities, including immigrants, and we will continue to defend their rights.

While we know this bill will not become law in Wisconsin, we are concerned that the introduction of this proposal will diminish trust in local government and negatively impact public safety. [Research](#) shows [policies like LRB-0779](#) that require local law enforcement to participate in federal immigration enforcement create additional distrust in the legal system. When community members are concerned about the possible immigration consequences of contacting police or interacting with government officials, more crimes go unreported and people grow more unwilling to participate in the legal process. We cannot afford additional tension placed on our already strained court system.”

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