

EXECUTIVE

Brown County

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Troy Streckenbach

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BROWN COUNTY EXECUTIVE

January 13, 2016

The Honorable Chris Kapenda, Chair
Committee on Public Benefit and Regulatory Reform
Room 15 South, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Re: S.B. 472, Incentive Program for Counties to Fight Fraud

Dear Chair Kapenda:

I write to express my full support for Senate Bill 472, a bi-partisan bill before the Committee on Public Benefit and Regulatory Reform that relates to an optional incentive program for counties and tribes that identify fraudulent activity in certain public assistance programs.

S.B. 472 is an important initiative to the residents of Brown County because it gives counties the financial incentive to fight welfare fraud and save taxpayer money. Many counties do not fully engage in welfare fraud because their efforts expend more general levy dollars than they are able to recoup from the state or federal government. Under S.B. 472, counties that go after public assistance fraud are allowed to keep up to 20% of the total funds that would be saved over a 12-month period because of their efforts detecting fraud in FoodShare and Medicaid. This gives counties an enhanced funding mechanism to fight waste, fraud and abuse in programs.

Here in Brown County, we have been actively engaged in preventing and pursuing fraud through a joint interagency initiative with the Brown County Sheriff and District Attorney, and our efforts have uncovered millions of dollars that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. As an example, in 2012, Brown County uncovered nearly \$600,000 in fraud. Yet, of that amount, only about \$80,000, or 13%, was recovered by the County, while our expenses were nearly \$200,000. Had this legislation been enacted, Brown County would have received roughly \$250,000, which could have funded additional investigative staff at no cost to the taxpayers. S.B. 472 provides the mechanism to encourage fraud detection, lends credibility to the public assistance programs, and also assures taxpayers that public assistance is utilized by those who truly need it.

I commend you for holding a hearing on this important legislation and urge its prompt passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Troy Streckenbach".

Troy Streckenbach
Brown County Executive

cc: Senator Sheila Harsdorf, Vice Chairman