



David A. Clarke Jr.  
Sheriff

# Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Sheriff to Bring Back 29 Laid-Off Deputies**

Milwaukee, WI – Milwaukee County Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. is calling back to duty 29 of the 48 deputies laid off by County Executive Chris Abele earlier this year. An on-going, dangerously low staffing shortage in the jail has emerged due to the county's Human Resources Department's inability to hire qualified candidates to fill corrections officer positions created by the lay-offs. They have only supplied 24 candidates to fill 60 necessary positions.

"County Human Resources has simply not been able to fill the requests I have made to fill vacancies," Clarke said.

The abrupt lay-offs occurred with no foresight by the County Executive. He made no allowance for planning by county Human Resources to hire corrections officers to fill the void created by the laying off of deputies working in Detention Services, in addition to the need for more corrections officers in the budget to fill vacancies lost by attrition. These deputies are already trained and their jail certification (a state requirement) is still valid.

In addition to county Human Resources not being able to keep up with recruitment and hiring, new hires have to spend a month in the training academy and work side by side with a fully certified corrections officer for a period of time before they can even start to work.

"I can put these deputies to work today," Clarke said.

"It is necessary to honor my sworn constitutional duty to maintain the running of the jail. I will not stand by and watch what I have determined to be an emergency employee safety and inmate safety situation turn into a crisis. I am going to act now to head it off."

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**Due to mandatory overtime caused by the staff shortages, some employees are going as long as a month without an off day. To get an off day, employees are resorting to calling in sick.**

**“It is ridiculous and dangerous situation. Due to the quick and poorly thought out budget decision, we do not have the correct amount of personnel for me to carry out my mandated responsibility. When officers go long stretches without an off day due to staffing shortages created by the County Executive’s budget, it causes burn-out and fatigue that, in a correctional setting, will lead to mistakes such as inmates being released in error, or inmates being placed in areas of the jail where they should not be housed, with rival gang members or with co-defendants and the like. It is a public safety hazard.”**

**Additionally, the Christensen consent decree, that the Sheriff is obliged to honor, mandates certain staffing levels in order to be in compliance.**

**The bulk of the payment for the rehiring of deputies will come from existing budget resources. The rest will come from curtailing inmate programs and applying those funds to employee labor costs. The sheriff will approach the county board for supplemental budget funding to pay for the rest.**

**“We can pay now when we can control the cost or we can pay later through lawsuits from employees, increased sick-time usage, workmen’s compensation claims and inmate claims. Done by my suggestions, this can be alleviated and fixed long term, and costs can be controlled. The status quo will lead to a disaster that I will not be any part of,” Clarke said.**

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