

Courtroom Security is a basic requirement for court users including litigants, attorneys, jurors, court staff, and the public in general. Across the Country, we've experienced more violent and aggressive behavior. The Court has, in particular, been confronted with these behaviors.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court Rules states:

(1) Courtroom. There should be no fewer than two sworn officers in each courtroom and each **court** commissioner hearing room when **court** is in session. The judicial officer may expressly direct otherwise. SCR 68.07

The comment in SCR 68.07 states:

The presence of sworn officers serves as a deterrent to violent outbursts and provides the ability to respond to incidents that may arise. In this respect, the open and obvious presence of uniformed officers is an example of basic **court** security principles designed to deter those intent on harm, detect those who have breached security, and limit the damage caused by the breach. It is impossible to predict the type of case that might lead to a violent incident. Therefore, it is essential to provide **court** security for all types of cases.

We must maintain adequate bailiff staffing of the courts to provide our community with the fundamental opportunity to participate in the judicial process safely. It would violate the communities' trust to allow our Felony Courts to be staffed with one bailiff instead of the two currently assigned and to remove altogether the bailiffs from Family Courts. It is unfortunately all too common to have violent behavior occur in our courtroom and hallways. It would be tragic to experience harm to court users or staff when we were aware of the potential dangers.

Proper bailiff staffing also allows us to be more efficient in court operations. Specifically, with two bailiffs we can avoid stopping the court proceedings when one bailiff is bringing in someone in custody or bringing a jury to the court from jury management. We are still working to address our backlog from Covid which is a priority.

The role of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office is "to serve and protect everyone within Milwaukee County with fairness, integrity, and respect". The duties are outlined in WI. Statute 59.27, which include "attend upon the circuit court held in the sheriff's county during its session." In altering the deputies available for Milwaukee's court system, it significantly impacts the ability for the Sheriff's Office to fulfill its role and statutory obligation. The bailiffs provide a vital and invaluable resource to our court system. At the forefront is the public who enter the courthouse every day to seek justice or complete their civil responsibility of reporting for jury duty. A reduction in bailiffs will impact the efficiency of delivering justice, this in turn touches every aspect of our community and prohibits Milwaukee from reaching its vision "by achieving racial equity, Milwaukee will be the healthiest county in Wisconsin".

Chief Judge Carl Ashley, Milwaukee County, District One