



# MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**Supervisor Juan Miguel Martinez • Supervisor Justin Bielinski**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Thursday, June 5, 2025

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## **Supervisors Martinez and Bielinski Demand Accountability and Transparency from Sheriff's Office Over County Jail Deaths**

MILWAUKEE - In light of recent incidents and ongoing concerns regarding the Milwaukee County Jail, County Supervisors Juan Miguel Martinez and Justin Bielinski are expressing deep frustration over the lack of transparency and accountability from the Sheriff's Office, particularly concerning suicide prevention efforts and in-custody deaths.

A recent legal filing revealed that a 19-year-old transgender individual attempted suicide after being placed in the jail's general population, despite explicit warnings from the family about the person's mental health history. This incident, along with the March 2025 death of a 49-year-old man following a medical crisis in custody and the more recent death of a 33-year-old man in May, where the cause remains under investigation, underscores a persistent and dangerous pattern. These tragedies highlight the continued failure of the Milwaukee County Jail to implement effective suicide prevention protocols and provide sufficient care. A recent audit of the jail revealed dangerous and deeply troubling practices within the facility. While reports claim that improvements have been made, conditions appear to remain unsafe for those in custody, and there is still a disturbing lack of transparency with both the public and the County Board.

"These are not isolated incidents. This is a crisis," said Supervisor Juan Miguel Martinez. "We keep handing over taxpayer money to the Sheriff's Office, and in return, we get zero accountability, no transparency, and no sense that anything is improving. Departments that are truly serving our communities are being shortchanged while we allow this office to operate unchecked. Enough is enough."

Supervisor Justin Bielinski added:

"When it comes to supporting the work of our Sheriff's Office, the County Board has upheld its end of the bargain. We have approved multiple pay increases for deputies and corrections staff in response to severe staffing shortages, authorized an audit of the jail in response to multiple in-custody deaths, and expanded the scope of an internal staffing study to address the ongoing vacancy and turnover problems in the department. Despite these actions, people keep dying in jail, and conditions don't seem to improve. This is unacceptable."

Supervisors Martinez and Bielinski are encouraging members of the public, especially those who have been directly impacted by conditions at the Milwaukee County Jail, to provide testimony at the upcoming Judiciary, Law Enforcement, and General Services (JLEGS) Committee meeting, where the outcomes of the jail audit will be discussed. The Committee meeting will be held on **Tuesday, June 17, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 203R of the Milwaukee County Courthouse**. The Supervisors believe that community voices, particularly from families who have lost loved ones or individuals who have experienced neglect or mistreatment, are essential to holding the Sheriff's Office accountable and ensuring meaningful change.

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