

DRW Statement in Opposition to AB69

March 2, 2023

AB69 would require schools with high rates of certain incidents to employ armed school resource officers (SROs) and would allocate federal American Rescue Plan Act funding for these armed officers in schools. However, research has failed to find solid evidence of increases in school safety when SROs are present. Having SROs in schools leads instead to a higher incidence of law enforcement referrals and arrests, frequently for school disciplinary issues.

In Wisconsin, while 14.5% of students have disabilities, those students represent over 34% of our state's school referrals to law enforcement--the sixth highest rate in the nation. The presence of SROs contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline, particularly for students of color who have disabilities as well.

Disability Rights Wisconsin opposes AB69 and recommends ceasing to employ SROs in our state's schools altogether, investing instead in appropriate school personnel and programs to address the needs and safety of our students with disabilities.