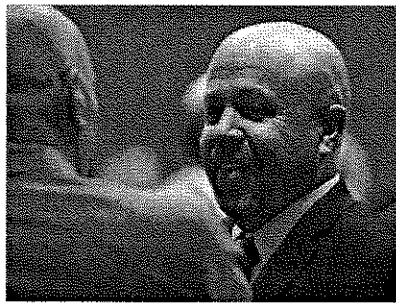


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## Editorial: Pass bills for homeless, then do more

Wisconsin State Journal editorial Apr 23, 2017



Steineke

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Assembly Majority Leader Jim Steineke calls his Republican package of four bills to fight homelessness across the state “a meaningful first step.”

He’s right. The public should appreciate and support this effort.

Yet further steps must include more investment and follow through. We’ll be watching closely and urging a sustained commitment.

Steineke, R-Kaukauna, and other lawmakers recently unveiled legislation to restructure state efforts to reduce and end homelessness, adjust some current programs and test new ideas for success.

As the State Journal editorial board called for last fall — following the newspaper’s special report on the homeless challenge in Madison and across the state — Steineke and his colleagues are proposing a single entity to oversee joint state efforts to combat the festering problem.

This is most welcome.

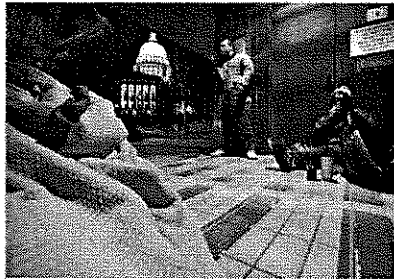
Legislation would create an Interagency Council on Homelessness to be chaired by the governor’s designee. Lt.



Speakers support GOP homelessness bills at hearing

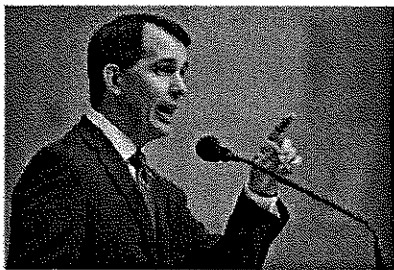


State Democratic lawmakers cool to GOP proposals to address homelessness



GOP lawmakers offer legislation to address homelessness, including key council

## More information



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After the State Journal's deep dive into homelessness, now what?

Help stop the slide into homelessness

Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, who has shown a serious interest in taking on the issue, would initially fill that post.

She's an appropriate choice. The secretaries of eight state agencies and other officials also would serve

The State Journal's four-part series last year, "Homeless in Madison | A City Challenged," drew on nine months of reporting. It showed, among many good ideas for better addressing the harsh realities of homelessness, that more coordination of efforts at the state and local levels were needed to avoid duplication and broaden and sustain the impact of programming.

Three other state bills being proposed are similar to language in Gov. Scott Walker's state budget. One would prioritize chronically homeless people on a waiting list for federal housing vouchers. Another bill would emphasize transitional housing. A final proposal would strive to connect homeless people to jobs and workforce training.

Critics say the proposals aren't nearly enough to get the job done, and fail to commit serious dollars to the cause.

They're right, too. The State Journal's deep dive into homelessness last year showed Wisconsin is spending far less to help desperate people find and keep housing than many other states.

Yet the Republican approach of ensuring coordination of state efforts and effectiveness of programming before dropping lots of money on the effort is understandable. Tying new money to performance standards shows respect for taxpayers, too.

Homeless advocates from across the state last week voiced

general support for the Republican package of bills, which drew some backing from Democrats.

We'd like to see more attention to helping homeless students and their families. It's hard to learn and grow when your life is so unstable and vulnerable.

But improving and approving these bills is still the best path to progress.

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