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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **School Resource Officers Do Not Belong in Wisconsin's Schools**

Milwaukee, WI – Disability Rights Wisconsin has issued a statement recommending that Wisconsin schools stop relying on school resource officers (SROs) as a response to school violence and invest instead in appropriate school personnel and programs to address the needs and safety of students with disabilities. There is growing national recognition that SROs are often not equipped to handle the crises they are asked to respond to in our schools and would be better addressed by a school's professional student services staff. "We need to stop spending scarce funding on SROs and instead increase funding to bring student support staff to the levels that their professional associations recommend," said DRW managing attorney Monica Murphy. "Wisconsin's students with disabilities, especially students of color, are too often placed at risk when law enforcement personnel are stationed within schools. Schools should be places where students with disabilities receive the support they need to reach their goals, rather than being places of policing."

There is no solid evidence that the use of SROs increases school safety, and in fact it can lead to higher incidence of referrals to law enforcement and arrests. Whether there is an arrest or not, SROs are too often involved in the restraint and seclusion of students, and DRW is concerned about the harm that can result. In Wisconsin schools over 80% of the students experiencing restraint or seclusion by SRO's are students with disabilities, and school-related arrests are even more disproportionate for students with disabilities who are also students of color.

To read DRW's full statement go to: <https://www.disabilityrightswi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SRO-statement-final-2020-10-06-acc.pdf>

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*Disability Rights Wisconsin is the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy system for the State of Wisconsin, charged with protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and keeping individuals free from abuse and neglect.*

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