GOOD MORNING, AND WELCOME TO THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY IN WISCONSIN’S JUSTICE SYSTEM.

TODAY, WE RESTORE TRUTH AND COMMON SENSE TO A JUSTICE SYSTEM THAT TOO OFTEN BRED CYNICISM IN OUR PEOPLE BY ALLOWING CRIMINALS TO LEAVE PRISON BEFORE COMPLETING THE SENTENCE HANDED DOWN BY A JUDGE.

TODAY, THE PEOPLE OF WISCONSIN CAN TAKE COMFORT IN THE SECURITY OF KNOWING THAT WHEN A CRIMINAL GETS 10 YEARS IN PRISON, HE WILL STAY IN PRISON 10 YEARS – NOT ONE DAY LESS. TODAY, WE SIGN TRUTH IN SENTENCING INTO LAW.

WE ARE WEIGHTING THE SCALES OF JUSTICE BACK IN FAVOR OF LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS.

THE OLD SYSTEM WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A GUESSING GAME…
WHEN THE PUBLIC WATCHED THE 10 O’CLOCK NEWS AND SAW THAT AN ATTACKER RECEIVED A 10 YEAR PRISON SENTENCE, THEIR NEXT THOUGHT WASN’T “GOOD, HE’S OFF OUR STREETS.” THEIR NEXT THOUGHT WAS, “OK, HOW MUCH TIME IS HE **REALLY** GOING TO SPEND BEHIND BARS.”

WITH PAROLE, MANDATORY RELEASE AND TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR, THE JUSTICE SYSTEM WAS SKEWED IN THE FAVOR OF THE CRIMINALS – GETTING THEM OUT OF PRISON AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

THERE WAS NO THOUGHT FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE CRIME, FOR THE POLICE OFFICERS WHO RISKED THEIR LIVES TO ARREST THE CRIMINAL, FOR THE PROSECUTORS WHO WORKED DILIGENTLY FOR A CONVICTION, OR FOR THE JUDGE WHO HANDED DOWN A JUST SENTENCE….

NO MORE.

TODAY, WE ABOLISH THE CHARADE OF PAROLE. WE ELIMINATE MANDATORY RELEASE. AND WE REPLACE TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR WITH MORE TIME IN FOR BAD BEHAVIOR.

IN ITS PLACE, WE PUT A SYSTEM THAT IS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND SIMPLE. A SYSTEM BASED ON THE TRUTH.
WHEN A JUDGE HANDS DOWN A SENTENCE, THE CRIMINAL WILL SERVE THAT ENTIRE SENTENCE. NO EXCEPTIONS. NO EXCUSES.

WE HAVE WITH US HERE TODAY CAROL AND DON GRADY, TOM JESCHKE, JIM AND GAIL NICHODEM, AND KAREN LOEBIG – FAMILIES WHO HAVE TRAGICALLY LOST A LOVED ONE AT THE HANDS OF A MURDERER. AND THEY HAVE ALL LONGED TO SEE THE DAY WHEN THOSE WHO COMMIT SUCH HEINOUS CRIMES STAY BEHIND BARS UNTIL THEIR SENTENCES ARE FULLY SERVED.

THE TRUTH IN SENTENCING LAW IS FOR THEM AND OTHERS VICTIMIZED BY CRIME. CRIME VICTIMS WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE SOME COMFORT IN KNOWING THAT ATTACKERS WILL BE PROPERLY AND FULLY PUNISHED FOR THEIR ACTIONS. AND THAT BEGINS WITH SERVING THEIR ENTIRE PRISON SENTENCE.
POLICE OFFICERS AND PROSECUTORS WILL KNOW THAT THE CRIMINALS THEY WORKED HARD TO TAKE OFF THE STREETS, WON’T RETURN ANY TIME SOON.

IF A JUDGE WANTS A CRIMINAL TO SPEND 10 YEARS BEHIND BARS, HE WILL BE ABLE TO SENTENCE HIM TO 10 YEARS AND KNOW THAT THE SENTENCE WILL BE SERVED.

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE PEOPLE OF WISCONSIN WILL KNOW THAT JUSTICE IS BEING SERVED TO THOSE WHO PREY ON SOCIETY. WHEN THE PUBLIC WATCHES THE 10 O’CLOCK NEWS AND SEES A JUDGE SENTENCE A THUG TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON, THEY CAN BE CONFIDENT HE WILL SERVE ALL 10 YEARS.

BUT OUR TRUTH IN SENTENCING PROGRAM IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST ENSURING A FULL SENTENCE WILL BE SERVED. IT ALSO PROVIDES GREATER PROTECTION TO THE PUBLIC AFTER THE CRIMINAL SERVES HIS SENTENCE.
FROM NOW ON A JUDGE WILL HAND DOWN TWO SENTENCES: A RIGID PRISON SENTENCE AND AN EXTENDED SUPERVISION SENTENCE, WHICH REQUIRES CRIMINALS TO BE SUPERVISED FOR A PERIOD OF TIME AFTER SERVING THEIR PRISON TERM.

THE EXTENDED SUPERVISION SENTENCE MUST BE A MINIMUM OF 25 PERCENT OF THE PRISON SENTENCE. SO IF A JUDGE SENTENCES A CRIMINAL TO 20 YEARS IN PRISON, HE MUST ALSO SENTENCE HIM TO AT LEAST 5 YEARS OF EXTENDED SUPERVISION.

EXTENDED SUPERVISION PROVIDES THE PUBLIC WITH AN EXTRA BLANKET OF SECURITY AS A PERSON MAKES HIS WAY FROM PRISON BACK INTO SOCIETY. IF THE PERSON BREAKS THE RULES, HE’S GOING RIGHT BACK TO PRISON.
WE’RE ALSO REPLACING TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR WITH MORE TIME IN FOR BAD BEHAVIOR. FROM NOW ON, WE EXPECT CRIMINALS TO BEHAVE WHILE IN PRISON. IF THEY DON’T, THE WARDEN CAN ADD MORE TIME TO THEIR STAY BEHIND BARS.

AND IF INMATES CONTINUE TO MISBEHAVE, THE WARDEN CAN TRANSFER THEM TO A MORE SECURE PRISON, ALL THE WAY UP TO OUR SUPERMAX.

THE THREAT OF MORE TIME IN PRISON AND LIVING IN A MORE SECURE PRISON WILL PROVIDE POWERFUL INCENTIVES FOR PRISONERS TO BE ON THEIR BEST BEHAVIOR WHILE BEHIND BARS.

WE’RE ALSO GOING TO STUDY OUR CRIMINAL CODE. WE’RE GOING TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR PENALTIES FIT THE CRIME. AND WE’RE GOING TO INVEST MORE IN PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE, FURTHER ATTACKING CRIME ON THE FRONT END.
TODAY, WE RESTORE CONFIDENCE TO OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM. WE MAKE IT MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE PUBLIC AND THE VICTIMS OF CRIME. WE MAKE OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM ABOUT ONE THING -- THE TRUTH.

((WORKING TOGETHER, WE MADE THIS DAY FINALLY HAPPEN. REMARKABLY, THE DEMOCRATS FOUGHT TRUTH IN SENTENCING AND TRIED TO WATER IT DOWN BY REDUCING SENTENCES 15 PERCENT FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR.

((BUT WE STOOD FIRM IN DEMANDING 100 TRUTH IN SENTENCING. FIRST, WE CONVINCED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL THAT ANYTHING LESS THAN 100 PERCENT WAS LESS THAN THE TRUTH – AND HE CAME ON BOARD. THEN, REPUBLICANS TOOK CONTROL OF THE LEGISLATURE AND WE WERE ABLE TO PASS TRUTH IN SENTENCING IN A SPECIAL SESSION.

((IT TOOK SOME 16 MONTHS TO PASS THE LEGISLATION FROM THE TIME IN INTRODUCED IT, BUT ONE WOULD NEVER KNOW IT BY THE FINAL VOTE TOTALS. OF COURSE, ALL THOSE CRITICS WHO TRIED TO DEFEAT THIS MEASURE OR WATER IT DOWN COULDN’T BE FOUND AS IT PASSED OVERWHELMINGLY IN THE SENATE AND THE ASSEMBLY.))
I WANT TO THANK REP. MARK GREEN AND REP. TOM SYKORA WHO TOOK LEAD ROLES IN THIS LEGISLATION, AS WELL AS SENS. DRZWIECKI AND ROESSLER. (ALSO NAME ANY OTHER LAWMAKERS THERE.)

SIGN THE LEGISLATION.