

RE: CAF

Dear Colleagues,

A memo was circulated by law enforcement organizations opposed to our bill reforming the Civil Asset Forfeiture process. The memo intentionally avoids the main thrust of the bill's protection – law enforcement should not be able to take property from someone who has NOT yet been charged with a crime or may NEVER be charged with a crime (much less convicted!).

Our bill does nothing to protect criminals, criminal activity, or property used in the commission of a crime. Rules for evidence are unaffected by this bill. For those who are charged and convicted, criminal forfeitures are just and lawful.

This bill, and a growing number reforms passed in states around the country, aim to protect innocent people who can't afford to spend more on attorney fees than the worth of the property they are trying to get back from an over-reaching forfeiture. It would be misguided for the leadership of the law enforcement organizations to argue that innocent people should have to pay an attorney to prove their property should be returned.

Criminal justice policy should focus on punishing the convicted, not raising revenue. Our bill accomplishes that.

Here is a recent article from the Journal Sentinel which can provide additional perspective.

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2017/01/23/bill-would-radically-reform-civil-asset-forfeiture/96949570/>

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

David Craig