

Statement of Ald. Bob Donovan February 20, 2009

As chair of the Common Council's Public Safety Committee, I was taken aback when I learned of the proposal in Governor Jim Doyle's state budget plan calling for early release of some inmates serving time at state correctional facilities.

Earning credits for behaving nicely behind bars does not, in my opinion, translate into automatic good behavior after these inmates are released. I wish the Governor could promise us that these early release inmates had "found the Lord" or somehow gotten on the straight and narrow. But of course, he cannot make that promise, and Milwaukeeans (let's face it - a large percentage of the released inmates will return to *our* streets) will be left to deal with the challenges and the consequences. And, if approved, this would come just as Milwaukee is seeing some real progress in improving public safety and stemming the tide against crime.

Recidivism is a major problem with individuals who have become all too familiar with Wisconsin correctional facilities, and yet the Governor wants to put these individuals back on our streets where they have little hope of finding real jobs in a very tough economy. How do we explain to neighborhood residents that the guy who just got busted for running the crack house down the block (where stolen goods from their homes and garages were being traded for crack and where prostitutes and violent gang members started hanging out) should actually still be in prison?

This proposal could be truly devastating for Milwaukee, and I urge the Governor to let it wither and die before it sees the light of day.

I also strongly urge citizens to call the Governor (608-266-1212) and their state legislators (go to www.legis.state.wi.us) and tell them to just say "NO!" to early release.

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