



**Willie L. Hines, Jr.**  
*City of Milwaukee Common Council*

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## Sheriff Clarke's gun rights diatribe disappointing in the wake of tragedy

### **Statement of Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr. December 19, 2012**

While our hearts and prayers go out to every family affected by the horrific massacre at a school in Connecticut last week, we owe it to them to work together as a nation and find ways to prevent something like this from ever happening again. Leaders like President Obama have put forward a vision for critical changes in which lawmakers from all political backgrounds should see the wisdom.

But locally, it seems Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke would rather divide than unite, would rather foster fear than inspire hope, and would rather ridicule the notion of peace instead of promoting it. His rambling diatribe on a "tea party" website this week, wherein he calls for posting armed guards in every school and describes the victims of last week's shooting as "sheep," should make every resident of the county uneasy.

I was appalled to see Sheriff Clarke's over-the-top comments in print. His is the kind of toxic rhetoric that would further divide the nation, and he spews it simply to advance his own extreme political agenda.

This tragedy exposes gaping loopholes in our system of background checks, gun registration, training for firearms owners and requirements for the proper, secure storage of weapons. Mounting headlines involving assault weapons and high-capacity clips should serve as a wake-up call, not an opportunity to settle political scores.

I firmly believe our Constitution is a brilliant document and respect the need for protecting our Second Amendment right to bear arms. But most Americans understand that doesn't mean unfettered access to weapons of mass destruction. They want to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, the mentally ill and those prone to violence. They reject the status quo of 10,000 gun deaths a year.

It's time to get to work representing *their* interests, and Sheriff Clarke isn't helping.