



Community violence concerning, proposed solutions lacking Ald. Hamilton offers alternative to Mayor's plan

Statement of Alderman Ashanti Hamilton August 12, 2013

At the beginning of the summer, Alderman Robert Donovan proposed taking \$600,000 from the contingency fund for police overtime and hiring 20 new officers. [That proposal was rejected](#) by the council and the mayor at the time because it was shortsighted, unsustainable and did nothing to address the root causes of violence in the city. Those criticisms are still valid. The fact that the mayor and the chief are now proposing a similar strategy demonstrates a lack of will to put resources in the proper places to address the problems.

I am requesting the mayor embrace a different approach. We must, as a local community, have a more comprehensive, community-empowering approach to dealing with the root causes of violence in our city. We shouldn't simply react to the violence after it occurs.

I suggest, again, that we reprioritize our spending through the city's Milwaukee Promise Initiative. City departments have identified approximately \$100 million annually that the city is already using to alleviate poverty and disparities that lead to violence, but I believe some of that funding can be used more wisely to provide support to programs and organizations that have a direct impact on the problems.

In an attempt to do this, the Community and Economic Development Committee [recently approved](#) an amendment to the Community Development Block Grant allocation plan to put \$1 million into categories that would support and organize police efforts, along with community-based organizations, schools and other levels of government, to create a city-wide model for responsibly addressing poverty, disparities and inequities in our most impoverished neighborhoods. Many council members have [expressed support](#) for these ideas in the past. They can follow through on that support by sustaining the amendment made at the committee.

(More)

Solutions lacking/ADD ONE

There has been almost universal support for national initiatives like the Byrne Innovation Grant, Choice Neighborhoods and Promise Zones, which offer resources and technical assistance to communities that are willing to take on the monumental task of transforming their most challenged neighborhoods into communities of promise and peace. Leaders at the state, county and Milwaukee Public Schools, along with the non-profit community and local residents, have expressed a willingness to partner with the city to pursue solutions worthy of the problems facing our city.

I reject any more quick-fix schemes, emotionally-outraged statements and press conferences that don't offer concrete solutions.

It is my firm belief that leveraging institutional resources with private and philanthropic investment, guided by true grassroots organizing around specific community development goals, will produce results far beyond the current discussion on violence reduction.