
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

April 14, 2015

Ald. Joe Davis, Sr.
(414) 286-3787

MEDIA ADVISORY

Ald. Davis demands Mayor use CDBG funds to address violence, poverty

In a letter (attached) sent to Mayor Tom Barrett today, **Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.** demanded the Mayor allocate federal funding to community-centered, faith-based institutions working to prevent violence and reduce poverty.

“The city receives millions of dollars from the federal Community Development Block Grant program that could be used to bring healing to parts of the city that need it most,” Alderman Davis said. “Instead, over my repeated objections and concerns, the Mayor uses it to fund city services year in and year out.”

“But now, in a year that’s seen a 160 percent uptick in homicides from this time last year, we are seeing the results of the poverty and neighborhood decay that the Mayor’s decisions have only exacerbated,” Alderman Davis said. “The Mayor needs to right these wrongs, and allocate the funding to groups which can directly impact the community.”

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JOE DAVIS, SR.

Alderman, 2nd District



CHAIR

- Community and Economic Development Committee
- Convenient Lending Task Force
- Sister Cities Committee

CO-CHAIR

- Fireworks Task Force

VICE CHAIR

- National League of Cities' International Council

April 14, 2015

Mayor Tom Barrett
Milwaukee City Hall
200 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Mayor Barrett,

I am formally demanding that you allocate **all** of the 2015 Community Development Block Grant reprogramming funding and approximately \$22 million of the proposed 2016 CDBG funding that the City of Milwaukee receives from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, and use it to fund faith-based initiatives that will empower existing faith-based programs to take the lead on healing a violent Milwaukee and start the process of addressing Milwaukee's poverty rate. If you didn't know, Mr. Mayor, there are many faith-based institutions with an existing infrastructure in place ready to assist the City of Milwaukee **right now!**

Our beloved city has suffered more than 40 homicides already this year, and now I cringe at your typical knee-jerk response—more police spending. May I remind you that the City of Milwaukee still has cases pending before the federal court? But once again, this irrational response of funding police overtime just shows how out of touch you are with the City of Milwaukee's needs. Your \$2 million proposal is a slap in the face to all who have been impacted by this political decision, which is a desperate attempt once again to put a Band-Aid on this systemic problem.

This issue of poverty has driven certain areas of the city into the liability category. Its impact on the daily lives of all Milwaukeeans is debilitating, and will reach the tipping point soon. If you were really serious about addressing violence in Milwaukee, you would have announced an alternative \$2 million employment program to address poverty with a private sector partnership. We would have heard a plan with clear objectives and defined outcomes to address neighborhood concerns and measure our success, not vague notions with no expectations attached.

I have tried to discuss with you my concerns regarding your improper use of CDBG funding in a manner which does not address the poverty rate each year during the City of Milwaukee's budget process, but you have consistently disregarded my request. As we are dealing with an extremely violent and unstable year in Milwaukee, you continue to avoid the reality that your decisions and your administration's lack of urgency have contributed to an increase in Milwaukee's poverty rate.

Each year, I have urged you to return full funding to the CDBG targeted areas that are directly related to the high-crime, impoverished and violent areas of the City of Milwaukee. But unfortunately, you continue to fund city services at the expense of deteriorating neighborhoods. As I walk through these once-stable neighborhoods, I see conditions that are reflective of extreme neglect, such as strewn litter, boarded-up homes, streets in disrepair, rampant drug dealing, and high unemployment or under-employment.

Mr. Mayor, return the funding to its intended use. Families are being torn apart by your decisions. Children are dying because of your arrogance. Black males are committing crimes due to your hesitancy. Milwaukee is getting poorer because of your lack of leadership.

And you have the audacity to say that black lives matter.

Extremely disappointed,

Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.
Chair, Milwaukee Common Council Community and Economic Development Committee

MEMBER

- Judiciary and Legislation Committee
- Public Safety Committee
- Steering and Rules Committee
- Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation
- National League of Cities' Board of Directors
- National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials Board of Directors

HONORARY CONSUL

- Republic of South Africa – State of Wisconsin