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CAVALIER JOHNSON
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

Exodus of city workers hurts neighborhoods, hurts Milwaukee

**Statement of Alderman Cavalier “Chevy” Johnson
December 19, 2017**

Last week, I attended the Milestone Recognition Program Ceremony which is hosted annually by the Milwaukee City Clerk’s Office. While I attended the program, I listened intently to the wonderful stories capturing the passion for the job and the strong work ethic exhibited by Milwaukee city employees each day. This year, we celebrated the contributions of employees marking between one year and 30 years of service to Milwaukee’s city government. While hearing these stories of service, I couldn’t help but to think to myself that we’re lucky to have this caliber of people contributing to making city government work every day and, we’re lucky to have this same caliber of people contributing to the stabilization of their neighborhoods.

Then I read a recent *Urban Milwaukee* article with a headline that 22% of city workers now reside outside of the city.

More than 1,400 employees including more than 30% of police officers and more than 30% of fire fighters live outside the city. That’s 1,400 fewer middle class job holders, 1,400 fewer neighborhood anchors, and 1,400 fewer Milwaukee city workers who are bringing that same sort of passion and commitment to service to work but now who are not delivering that to our neighborhoods.

As employees of the city who live in my district retire it’s been my practice to go to their door, shake their hand, and personally thank them for their contributions and service to city government, their neighborhoods, and fellow city residents. To have the opportunity to recognize these citizens and the value that they bring to moving our municipality forward as well as to their neighborhoods is an honor that I take pride in doing. I hope to continue doing that but with State changes to local residency rules (including Milwaukee’s that had been in place beginning in 1938) and current trends, it seems increasingly unlikely that neighborhoods and residents in the city will benefit from the positive contributions of the very employees that their tax dollars pay for.

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