
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Bob Donovan
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Alderman Donovan Says He Refuses to Accept Early Release Felons

*Public Safety Chair says Governor's Early Release Initiative will Jeopardize Public
Safety; News Conference Tuesday at City Hall*

In a symbolic move meant to generate greater public awareness of a state budget measure that could put thousands of prison inmates back on Milwaukee's streets, **Alderman Bob Donovan**, chair of the Common Council's Public Safety Committee, said he's unwilling to accept any of the newly released convicted felons in his near south side district.

Alderman Donovan said Milwaukee and his constituents "deserve better treatment than this." "Many of my constituents volunteer long hours in the Block Watch program and in other ways to make their neighborhoods safer, and they need someone to fight for their best interest instead of letting inmates come back early," he said.

"I'll be damned if the state is going to balance its budget on the backs of the decent, hard-working people of my district," he said. "I don't want even one convicted felon being released early to my district – period."

The alderman will hold a news conference to discuss the matter at 11:30 a.m. tomorrow (Tuesday, March 16, 2010) in the third floor anteroom of the Council Chamber at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.

According to Alderman Donovan, a minimum of 65% to 75% of the roughly 3,000 inmates eligible for early release as part of the state budget's Criminal Justice Reform Initiative will return to the Milwaukee area, where – based on the documented high rate of recidivism – many will re-offend. Alderman Donovan said he's received no response to a January letter (see attached) from him and co-signed by several colleagues asking Governor Doyle to suspend the early release portion of the initiative.

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Early Release Initiative Ripped/ADD ONE

Under Chief Edward Flynn, Alderman Donovan said the Milwaukee Police Department has significantly reduced crime in the city, including a 25% drop in total violent crime over the past two years. “We’ve had double-digit decreases in robbery, aggravated assault, and auto theft, and people have taken notice that their neighborhoods are quieter and safer,” he said.

“But this early release program will, I fear – and Chief Flynn has said as much – erase the tremendous gains that we’ve made in recent years,” Alderman Donovan said. “Just as (former) Governor Thompson said years ago – ‘Stick it to ‘em (Milwaukee)’ on the Miller Park financing, now Governor Doyle is ‘sticking it to Milwaukee’ with an influx of convicted felons who should be serving their full sentences.”

Alderman Donovan said Milwaukee is made even more vulnerable because of its high rate of police officer vacancies – set to approach 300 by later this year. “We are headed in the wrong direction with our vacancies, and now comes this ill-conceived idea of granting early release for some inmates,” he said.

“What’s next – brownie points for inmates who keep a tidy cell?” he said.

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