



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

For Immediate Release:
January 4, 2010

Contact: Alex Runner
414-286-3771

President Hines Exhorts Citizens to Obey Police, Welcomes Chief's Review of Recent Fatalities

As a result of individuals fleeing police on two separate occasions during this past week, three people are dead. First and foremost, my thoughts and prayers go out to the families and loved ones of the deceased. Second, my message to citizens and members of the media has always been clear and consistent: Never flee from police when you are being pulled over, regardless of whether you are guilty or innocent. Fleeing police only makes the situation worse, and as we have witnessed in recent days, it can even result in death. Third, I consider it appropriate to fully examine any interaction between police and citizens that results in death.

Some may have found my third point controversial, but I have spoken with Chief Flynn and we both agree that there is nothing controversial about reviewing these incidents – both from a police perspective and from a community perspective. I am personally advocating for those who flee police to receive harsher penalties, and if there is anything that I can do as a local legislator to ensure that outcome, I have pledged to do so.

I have no reason to assume that police officers handled these recent traffic stops inappropriately, but I am also not averse to evaluating events from every side, including an evaluation of police procedures. Based on the evidence that is available, it appears that police officers acted responsibly and that those who were fleeing MPD simply made fatal errors in judgment. Nevertheless, reviewing actions, policies and procedures is not tantamount to assigning guilt. While others might fear in-depth examination, I see no reason to be fearful of additional facts.

At the end of the day, I have always found it better to have more information rather than settling for less information. For that reason, I was pleased to hear from Chief Flynn that he is directing his department to fully examine every aspect of the two incidents that resulted in fatalities. This is the most responsible course of action and the chief is to be commended for taking it.