



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 24, 2012

U.S. Attorney's insight needed in Williams death investigation

Joint Statement from members of the Common Council

We are respectfully requesting that the office of the U.S. Attorney conduct an investigation into the case of Derek Williams, who died last year while in the custody of Milwaukee police.

The changing of the coroner's determination that Mr. Williams died not of natural causes but as a result of homicide has sparked concern and many questions, and we believe that a U.S. Attorney's investigation will provide "fresh eyes" and the fresh perspective that is needed to look into this troubling case.

Last year, Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs and Alderman Willie C. Wade brought forth legislation sparked by the Derek Williams case (and other deaths in police custody) that directed the Fire and Police Commission to report to the Common Council biannually, by January 31 and July 31, on new incidents of officer-involved shootings and deaths of citizens in police custody. The measure put in place a scheduled reporting of these incidents in order to better investigate the causes and to keep all involved aware of procedures for the safe handling of persons in custody. We strongly recommend that the thorough reinvestigation of the coroner's finding in the Derek Williams case is covered in that report to the Common Council.

The dash cam video has raised serious questions about how police handled Derek Williams when he was struggling to breathe. The video was enough for us and thousands of reasonable community members to question the handling of Mr. Williams and police processes in general.

We believe accountability to the public by police and investigative agencies is needed, and it is our hope that an investigation by the U.S. Attorney will be a step toward more accountability and greater transparency in this case.

(More)

Signed,



Ald. Ashanti Hamilton



Ald. Joe Davis, Sr.



Ald. Nik Kovac



Ald. Robert Bauman



Ald. Milele A. Coggs



Ald. Willie C. Wade



Ald. Michael J. Murphy



Ald. José G. Pérez



Ald. James A. Bohl, Jr.



Ald. Tony Zielinski



Ald. Willie L. Hines, Jr.