

## JOE DAVIS, SR.

Alderman, 2nd District

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- Convenient Lending Task Force
- Sister Cities Committee

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- National League of Cities' International Council



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- 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

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- Republic of South Africa – State of Wisconsin

# Bed-sharing tragedies are senseless, preventable and shameful

## Statement of Alderman Joe Davis, Sr. December 3, 2013

Children are God's most precious gift, a source of hope for the future and the most vital resource we have as a community. It's time that every member of the Milwaukee community recognized them as such and reflected that in their actions.

This week, the city is mourning the loss of yet another infant, the sixteenth to die this year while sharing a bed with a parent. While my heart breaks for the loss of this darling child, I'm also furious.

A parent is supposed to be a child's primary nurturer and protector. To place an infant in harm's way by sharing a bed with them is not only irresponsible, it ignores the common sense advice that experts have been advocating for years. The frequency with and degree to which alcohol and drugs play a role are not an excuse for these deaths—they only compound the blame that the parents bear.

Of the 16 babies who have died in bed-sharing incidents this year, 12 of them are African American—three out of every four. While infant safety is an issue that affects people of all races, it is clearly an issue that Milwaukee's African American community needs to address.

I am incredibly grateful for the experience that I had growing up as a child in the inner city. My parents cared for me, protected me, watched over me and kept me out of trouble, putting my needs ahead of their own desires. I have tried to emulate their responsible style of parenting with my own children, and throughout the city are many examples of families doing the same.

But a community can be judged on how it cares for its most vulnerable members. By that metric, these mounting yet preventable infant deaths caused by irresponsible parents are not only tragic, they are shameful. As a community and as parents, we absolutely must do better for our children.

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