

JOE DAVIS, SR.

Alderman, 2nd District

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- National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials Board of Directors

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Praying for a swift, thorough recovery for officer involved in shooting, and for the victim's family

Statement of Alderman Joe Davis, Sr. May 2, 2014

Following the officer-involved shooting in Red Arrow Park this week, right in City Hall's "back yard," I would like to express my concern for the 38-year-old officer who was forced in the course of his duties to do something I'm sure he wishes he never would have had to do. This officer is a 13-year veteran of the department, he was injured while doing a dangerous job, and I'm hoping and praying for his full and speedy recovery.

My thoughts are also with the family of the 31-year-old man who was shot. No family should have to lose a loved one at such a young age, and this tragedy is compounded by the failures of our mental health care system that resulted in this situation. This man is a victim of schizophrenia. It was only through the repeated failures of the system that is supposed to intervene in cases like his that he came to be in that park in a dangerous life and death situation with that officer.

Police officers are trained that the use of deadly force is an action of last resort. But in the event that their lives or the lives of innocent people are threatened, their training dictates that they should utilize the amount of deadly force necessary to immediately end the threat. It's a difficult position to be put in, where snap judgments have to be made within a split second.

It sometimes seems we're only reminded of the gratitude that we owe the men and women of the Milwaukee Police Department in the wake of tragedies like this. I, for one, am as grateful as ever for the officers who are a regular presence in our neighborhoods, and all the men and women who serve in the department.

In the very near future, I will be working with a community group on a process to address the concerns expressed by the Chief of Police. I believe he is correct when he says there is a need for additional supportive mental health services—for both the community as well as our officers.