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**ROBERT G. DONOVAN**

Alderman, 8th District

## **City of Milwaukee: Government by elitists and the people don't count**

**Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan  
December 17, 2014**

For anyone paying attention to yesterday's Common Council actions regarding the proposed downtown streetcar, there are two key takeaways that should be VERY disconcerting to the average Milwaukee citizen.

First, the mayor is now truly taking extra steps, and attempting to make extra certain, that the streetcar project will never go to the people in the form of a binding referendum. The move to avoid the referendum on the public borrowing for the project (by having the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee issue bonds for the project) is pure circumvention of the public process set forth in state law and is truly SHAMEFUL!

Not allowing the public to have its voice heard in a binding referendum means the mayor truly doesn't care what the people think, and shows elitism at its worst, in my opinion.

Second, barring a miracle, it certainly appears (based on yesterday's votes) the votes will go the mayor's way in January when the streetcar comes up again for a vote. However, I choose to remain optimistic and hope to sway a few of my colleagues my way. My bottom line is that I have fought against the streetcar because I am serving the people I represent and fighting for their best interests – something I have been doing since I was first elected 8<sup>th</sup> District Alderman.

I can only assume that my colleagues – both those for and against the streetcar – are also motivated in the same manner, and are casting their votes because of what they're hearing from constituents.

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That said, while I certainly respect my colleagues who believe this project will be an ongoing jobs program for unemployed city residents, I do not hold that opinion. This project will only provide a limited number of short-term construction jobs, and VERY few permanent jobs. We need to attract private sector businesses and corporations who can provide the long-term employment opportunities that Milwaukee truly needs, and we need to make major changes to our educational system to help prepare our children for jobs and careers.

In my years of service as an elected official, I have developed a tremendous respect for the collective common sense of the people. A referendum would provide the opportunity for the people to voice their collective common sense on this project, but it's clear the mayor doesn't want to hear what the people have to say when it comes to the streetcar.

At the very least, yesterday's move to hold the Council's next action on the streetcar project until January means that my colleagues and I can now enjoy the holidays without a bitter taste in our mouths.

Merry Christmas, Mr. Mayor.

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