

MEMBER

- Public Safety Committee
- Public Works Committee
- Anti-Graffiti Policy Committee



ROBERT G. DONOVAN

Alderman, 8th District

Juvenile crime problems go up, and curfew enforcement goes down

**Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan
July 1, 2014**

If you are under 17 years old in Milwaukee, the law requires you to be home by 10 p.m. on weekdays and by 11 p.m. on weekends. In many of our neighborhoods during the summer, kids can be seen out and about well after curfew, making it fairly clear that Milwaukee police are working on other, more pressing and serious crime issues.

In fact, according to the Municipal Court, curfew citations to teens hit a high in 2006, when well over 2,000 curfew violation citations were issued. So far this year, only 70 citations have been issued. At that rate, we'll be lucky if 150 curfew citations are issued!

This issue has been in the news recently for a few different reasons. On June 14, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* published an editorial urging the city to adopt an even stricter curfew – 9 p.m. The argument made – and rightly so – is that we need to try every possible angle we can to curb the deadly gun violence that is plaguing too many neighborhoods in the city on an almost daily basis.

I will go further: I believe *not* enforcing the curfew simply emboldens young people to be out and about after dark, committing crimes. In fact, I have been told by well-placed sources that young people are coming in to my near south side district after dark from other parts of the city to steal cars, and to commit burglaries, robberies and other crimes.

In addition, the lack of enforcement very much leads to other quality of life issues, including loud music, loitering and vandalism. These are all activities and issues that are referred to in “broken windows policing,” and I believe they are directly related to the lack of curfew enforcement.

-More-

Page 2

In my mind we need to get back to basics in order to improve the quality of life and increase stability across Milwaukee, and that means enforcing our curfew law.

Now, I realize this is a challenging time for the police department, with the chaos of the 9-1-1 call center (the center receives a staggering 750,000 calls per year – a mind boggling number!) and officers who are basically becoming burned out by the sheer pace and volume of calls for service.

Mixed in with all of this is the fact that we are now seeing a backlog in MPD nuisance property investigations, as officers are being reassigned to deal with a large uptick in car thefts. The car theft situation is a huge problem, but I am wondering if it might also be connected to our lack of curfew enforcement?!

Car thefts are by law a required reporting statistic to the FBI. However, MPD is not required to report incidents and arrests for prostitution, drug dealing, curfew violations and nuisance activities – all classic “broken window” issues that directly impact the quality of life in Milwaukee!

Call me cynical, but I think the lack of enforcement in curfew and nuisance activities – and the major shift to address car thefts – is directly tied to making the mayor and Chief Flynn happier about our crime statistics.

-30-

