

## COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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Alderman, 8th District

# Sheriff Clarke is right on the money

## Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan August 5, 2014

Yesterday Sheriff Clarke delivered a scathing and deadly accurate take on Mayor Barrett's nonexistent public safety strategy. The Sheriff pointed out that the mayor's lack of a plan does not bode well for August – a typically deadly month in Milwaukee in the recent past.

And in response the mayor said that he believes that “every neighborhood in the city deserves to be safe.”

I couldn't agree more, but the problem has been and continues to be that the mayor has not delivered the safety each neighborhood deserves. His rhetoric simply does not match reality!

The mayor also mentioned that the community must get involved and be a part of the public safety solution.

I wholeheartedly agree, and the public is and has been involved, Mr. Mayor! Too often the public calls 9-1-1 for help and is put on hold, or given the run-around. And far too often community members see officer response times of an hour or two for certain types of calls for service.

The public cannot make arrests, cannot bust drug dealers and drug houses, or take guns off the streets. Only Milwaukee police officers can do those critical things.

In addition, the mayor can't seem to hold a news conference without making an obligatory reference to guns. Guns do not jump into cars and drive through inner city neighborhoods, and those guns don't pull their own triggers.

### **Here's a wake-up call for the mayor: Guns aren't as much the problem as much as people are!**

As sad as it is, mayor, your administration has failed to deliver on keeping city neighborhoods safe. But, just as I remember you holding a news conference late last summer, asking that Governor Walker help fund additional police personnel costs for more patrols – here you are again, yet this time stating that there will be increased police patrols in August to combat the violence and disorder.

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This is quite interesting, as many police officers have indicated that this increase in patrols and police overtime is news to them. They are asking “Where are these extra patrols?” “When, exactly, will these patrols begin?”

But mayor, this is just for August...what about September? What about October? What about three years from now, or five years from now?

The mayor is all about reaction and impulse, when what our city really needs (and deserves) is a comprehensive public safety plan.

The mayor’s sudden plan to use overtime to increase patrols this month is not good news to a police force that is already experiencing burnout and low morale. In terms of how effective this strategy will be remains to be seen, but I believe it will be about as effective as putting a Band-Aid on a cancer victim.

Also, am I the only one who is scratching my head that the mayor is going to spend a huge amount in overtime for officers who are being furloughed at times during the year?

Sheriff Clarke is right: If only the mayor had the guts to do what was done in New York City – hiring enough officers to successfully put the clamps on all types of criminal activity – we might be in store for a quiet August, September and beyond. Chief Flynn has done everything he’s been asked to do (and done it well), but he just does not have the additional officers he needs to put a blanket on the city’s worst neighborhoods for crime.

And here we are, Mr. Mayor, wondering and worrying about what the rest of August will bring in our city.