



**Michael J. Murphy**  
*City of Milwaukee Common Council*

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## **A less than adequate response on oversaturation of sex offenders in Milwaukee**

**Statement from Common Council President Michael J. Murphy  
May 27, 2014**

According to information provided by the State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections under a recent open records request, of the 2,399 state registered sex offenders living in Milwaukee County as of February 20, 2014, 2,138 (or **89%**) **were residing in the City of Milwaukee.**

This information is so troubling that I sent a letter to the head of the DOC, asking that the department discontinue placement of sex offenders within the City of Milwaukee until a fair and equitable resolution for the placement of sex offenders statewide can be found.

The response I received from Grace Roberts, director of Sex Offender Programs in the DOC's Division of Community Corrections, was woefully inadequate. Ms. Roberts essentially told me, "Yeah, we're aware the current situation is causing oversaturation of Milwaukee County sex offender placements in your city, but we're not going to help fix the problem – go take it up with your elected state officials."

I very much appreciate Ms. Roberts' "Civics 101" recommendation to talk to my elected representatives, but my response to her is threefold:

- As the director overseeing a program that is obviously broken, what role will you and your office be playing to fix and resolve the glaring problems that exist?
- Is your office actively working to correct the problems? If so, what steps are you taking and how can I help provide greater insight from Milwaukee's perspective?
- If "protecting the public is a priority" for your office, does that mean we will be waiting 16 years for the fix to the obvious sex offender placement problem (as was the case for the broken sex offender database)?

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I am calling on Governor Walker to immediately issue an executive order to cease the placement of additional offenders until such time a fair statewide system is created. In my view, the Governor could show good faith and concern for Milwaukee residents if he champions this issue and includes it in his special session on Voter ID legislation.

It is clear to me that inaction by the State of Wisconsin and the DOC specifically, indicates that it does not fully appreciate the negative impacts on the health, safety and welfare of Milwaukee residents that could result from the continued concentration of sex offenders residing in the City of Milwaukee.

The consequences of the state turning a blind eye to the oversaturation of sexual offenders will be the passage of a city ordinance restricting placement. That is why the Department of Corrections should provide leadership on this issue, and if not them, then I call upon the Governor to show some leadership with an executive order.

I will be waiting for a response from our Governor.

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