

JOE DAVIS, SR.

Alderman, 2nd District

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City violence hints at deeper problems

Statement of Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.

May 4, 2015

This weekend, the City of Milwaukee experienced violence once again, as the year's homicide total climbed above 50. The unfortunate reality is that we are experiencing these tragedies with no plan in sight from the Mayor, other than sweeping our street with law enforcement just so that the black lives that he said matter can be released and reoffend. It's hypocrisy at its finest.

Milwaukee's poverty has blown way out of control due to the Mayor's indecisiveness, and the unfortunate reality that we face, but that he will not admit, is that we continue to spend precious resources on things that do not address this economic crisis. The Mayor continues to stick his head in the sand (I'm being kind in that assessment), ignoring the inevitable—chaos.

What should be done is for this current administration to return the Community Development Block Grant funding that is allocated to the City of Milwaukee for addressing poverty, and to instead invest it into the areas of greatest need—our impoverished neighborhoods and our human capital.

As we see Milwaukee spiral into an economic crisis, the city continues to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on initiatives like a streetcar project, but yet ignores our crime rate, which will cost the city billions of dollars of investment. This analysis of longterm economic growth must be at the forefront as we prioritize solutions to Milwaukee's public safety crisis.

Yet we now have a proposal to increase the Milwaukee County sales tax by one cent to pay for public projects and the arena, while once again the City of Milwaukee's economic and public safety crisis is ignored. This is insane!

So the unfortunate reality I see is that once again, we have not invested in impoverished neighborhoods substantially enough to force real change in social and economic behavior. We have not put together a comprehensive economic agenda to attract new businesses to the City of Milwaukee. We continue to rely on the State of Wisconsin's legislature to make decisions about our destiny as the largest city in the state, instead of doing it ourselves. Now that's a tragedy.