
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

April 7, 2015

Ald. Bob Donovan
(414) 708-9417

MEDIA ADVISORY

Alderman Donovan asks for change in MPD vehicle pursuit policy

Current 'no chase' policy is emboldening criminals, Alderman Donovan says

Alderman Bob Donovan has sent a letter (**attached**) to Chief Edward Flynn asking that the chief rescind the Milwaukee Police Department's current policy on vehicle pursuits. The alderman said the current policy, put in place by Chief Flynn in 2010, is having a negative effect on public safety across the city. Mayor Tom Barrett, MPD Chief of Staff Joel Plant, and members of the Fire and Police Commission were copied on the letter.

Alderman Donovan said police sources have indicated to him that in the first three months of 2015 alone, approximately 750 instances where vehicles would have been pursued under the former pursuit policy have occurred. "These criminals are literally thumbing their noses and flipping off officers as they drive off, knowing that officers will not pursue them," the alderman said.

In the letter, Alderman Donovan writes: "Incidents of vehicle theft have risen alarmingly on the near south side in recent months and police officers inform me that this is due in large part to thieves knowing that they will not be pursued. Frankly, this outcome was as predictable as it is logical and I said so publicly at the time this directive was issued. Further, I need not remind you of the deaths, injuries, and accidents that have resulted from this rise in vehicle thefts."

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

VICE CHAIR

- Public Works Committee

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- Anti-Graffiti Policy Committee
- Judiciary and Legislation Committee



ROBERT G. DONOVAN
Alderman, 8th District

April 7, 2015

Chief Edward M. Flynn
Milwaukee Police Department
749 W. State St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Chief Flynn,

I write this letter to request that you rescind your March 2010 change to the Milwaukee Police Department's vehicle pursuit policy.

I know that your decision to require that officers have probable cause that a violent felony has been committed before they may engage in pursuit was made with the best of intentions. I further know that much has been made of the minor decrease in the number of officer-involved traffic accidents caused by pursuit since this directive was implemented. What neither you nor the media has been willing to acknowledge, however, is the high cost of this policy to public safety and order.

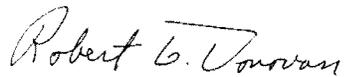
Incidents of vehicle theft have risen alarmingly on the near-South Side and across all of Milwaukee in recent months and police officers inform me that this is due in large part to thieves knowing that they will not be pursued. Frankly, this outcome was as predictable as it is logical and I said so publically at the time this directive was issued. Further, I need not remind you of the deaths, injuries, and accidents that have resulted from this rise in vehicle thefts. These incidents will never be weighed in the balance against the small decrease in officer-involved traffic accidents of which so much has been made.

I also wonder about the effect on public order and force morale when officers are mocked by offenders who know they will not – cannot – be pursued. I have it on good authority that, in the first three months of 2015 alone, there have been more than 750 instances in which officers would have pursued a suspected offender

under the old policy but were forbidden from doing so under your March 2010 directive. This does not, cannot, and will not provide for a safe community.

You have long prided yourself on running a department driven by data. This is commendable. I would ask that you look at the evidence assembled over the last five years and tell me what you see. To me, there is no question that the present circumstances prove that the March 2010 pursuit directive was a mistake that should be undone before it causes even more harm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert G. Donovan".

Robert G. Donovan
Alderman, 8th District

Cc: Mayor Tom Barrett
Chief of Staff Joel Plant
Members of the Fire & Police Commission