
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

August 3, 2015

Ald. Bob Donovan
(414) 708-9417

MEDIA ADVISORY

Ald. Donovan proposes amending no pursuit policy to address mobile drug trade

Alderman Bob Donovan has sent a letter (**attached**) to Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn and Mayor Tom Barrett urging the police department to amend its policy of non-pursuit of fleeing vehicles unless it is determined the vehicle/occupants are connected to a violent crime.

Alderman Donovan said the policy is “fueling crime across Milwaukee and the metro area.” “It is imperative that our police officers stay ahead of the criminals, and with this policy in place the criminals are exploiting the policy and bragging about their crimes on social media,” the alderman said.

“The other very troubling element to this is that the criminals are also exploiting the policy to peddle their poison (mostly heroin and cocaine) across our city,” he said. “Something must change, and that something must happen now.”

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

MEMBER

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



ROBERT G. DONOVAN

Alderman, 8th District

August 3, 2015

Mr. Edward Flynn
Chief of Police
749 W. State St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Tom Barrett
Mayor of Milwaukee
200 E. Wells St. Rm. 201
Milwaukee, WI 53202

All Members of the Fire and Police Commission
200 E. Wells St. Rm. 706
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Mayor Barrett, Police Chief Flynn and Members of the Fire and Police Commission:

As you are aware, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published a July 19 story titled "Gangs Turn To Rolling Drug Houses, Exploiting Chase Policy".

The Journal Sentinel's investigation revealed "an innovative, violent gang of drug dealers is exploiting the Milwaukee Police Department's own policy on vehicle pursuits and other rules as they feed an incessant hunger for heroin across southeastern Wisconsin and contribute to a surging number of murders in the city (of Milwaukee)."

I'll go a step beyond the Journal Sentinel's language and call these violent, drug-dealing gang members for what they are: urban terrorists. These individuals are using fear, intimidation and reckless, brutal violence to gain control of many of our city's streets and neighborhoods.

The drug gangs by way of their rolling drug houses are fueling heroin and other drug use, hundreds of drug overdose deaths, drug and gun-related violence, secondary crimes including auto theft and carjacking, armed robbery and burglary and are a major contributor to our city's skyrocketing homicides.

The Journal Sentinel's investigation revealed the drug gangs are innovative, changing their techniques in an effort to stay two steps ahead of the police department's policies and rules. Allowing violent drug gangs to operate ahead of our police department poses an immediate and severe threat to public safety and must be stopped. If you disagree with me in that regard I would appreciate your explanation.

The department's current pursuit policy states that before a pursuit can commence an officer must have probable cause to believe an occupant of a vehicle was just involved in or is committing a violent felony or is a "clear and immediate threat to the safety of others".

I believe the vast majority of the public agrees—the occupants of rolling drug houses pose an immediate and severe threat to public safety based on the fact the vehicles are occupied by violent drug dealers armed with high-powered firearms. These urban terrorists must be stopped and apprehended immediately to prevent future crime, violence and death in our community.

As the department's current pursuit policy stands and as the Journal Sentinel reported, officers are unable to pursue these vehicles, often because the drug dealers have so heavily tinted their vehicle's windows officers cannot see inside to make a certain determination of who or what is inside and what those persons are doing.

I believe the vast majority of the public agrees—should an officer encounter a vehicle which they know or have reason to believe is stolen and/or has temporary or stolen tags, has heavily tinted windows and may be a known rolling drug house, probable cause is established to believe the occupant(s) have or are about commit a violent act because by definition they are VIOLENT drug dealing criminals, and therefore the officer must be given the authority to initiate a pursuit to take these criminals off our streets!

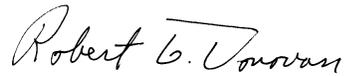
It has been two weeks since the Journal Sentinel's report and I have not heard one comment or statement from any of you that we need to have the vehicle pursuit policy amended to adapt to the threat posed to our community by rolling drug houses.

I therefore make formal request on behalf of the concerned citizens of the City of Milwaukee that you immediately move to amend the department's pursuit

policy to address these rolling drug houses and any other known mechanisms utilized by these violent criminals.

As the matter of rolling drug houses is an immediate public safety emergency, I and the citizens of Milwaukee expect a written answer or statement from each of you within 72 hours regarding my request to amend the vehicle pursuit policy to address the very real threat to public safety presented by rolling drug houses.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert G. Donovan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Robert G. Donovan
Alderman, 8th District