



Ashanti Hamilton
City of Milwaukee Common Council

Pres. Hamilton blasts council members for divisive and irresponsible press release

Statement of President Ashanti Hamilton November 17, 2016

Earlier today, a majority of the Common Council delegation from the South Side of Milwaukee issued a press release that divisively and irresponsibly urged the Milwaukee Police Department to rearrange its priorities and assign more officers to the South Side.

In doing so, these council members, three of whom serve on the Public Safety Committee, ignored their responsibility to represent the public safety concerns of the *entire* city. The committee has spent the last several months listening to input from residents, community-based organizations and law enforcement professionals from throughout the city, all of whom are calling for a more evidence-based, comprehensive approach to public safety.

As a council, we have attempted to support the MPD's efforts to foster a more community-based policing strategy, and we have secured the commitment from MPD and multiple police districts that they will provide more foot patrol and beat patrol officers in a number of neighborhoods throughout the city—including both the north and south sides.

However, before we could even begin to work with the department to devise a plan on what that would look like, these council members are pressuring the department to pursue the old way of policing—just for their individual neighborhoods.

A strategy that pits neighborhood against neighborhood for policing resources is simply irresponsible, and it is not the direction the council should take. There is a balance between responsible, holistic leadership and representing our districts with verve, enthusiasm and passion. But when I see this sort of behavior from a majority of a committee tasked with representing the interests of the *entire* city, I have to call it out.

I would urge these council members to rescind their letter and continue to work with MPD command staff—not just to put more officers on their streets, but to devise a plan that would effectively reduce crime throughout the entire City of Milwaukee.