
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

January 19, 2016

Bill Arnold
(414) 286-3285

Youth Council drafts youth-focused restorative justice initiative

Legislation creating Milwaukee's first-ever youth-focused restorative justice initiative has been drafted by the **City of Milwaukee Youth Council** and is being recommended for adoption by the Common Council.

The resolution (**attached – Council file #151053**) creating the Milwaukee Youth Council's Restorative Justice Initiative Advisory Board is sponsored by **Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.** and **Alderman Tony Zielinski**. The measure was recommended for adoption by the Youth Council at its meeting on January 13 at City Hall, and is expected to be taken up by the Community and Economic Development Committee on February 1.

Alderman Davis said the initiative will seek to hold youth accountable for municipal citations for truancy, possession of marijuana, and other violations while seeking to reduce warrants and unpaid citations that can lead to driver's license suspensions.

"As we know, not having a valid driver's license is a significant barrier to getting a job, getting a bank account, and many other key things that can help a person get started on the right track," Alderman Davis said. "This initiative has the promise of keeping Milwaukee youth on the right track and empowering them so they can be successful."

Alderman Zielinski said the principle of restorative justice focuses on repairing and rebuilding relationships by emphasizing stakeholders' roles in the criminal justice process, instead of merely satisfying abstract legal principles.

-More-

Restorative Justice Initiative/ADD ONE

“Numerous studies have demonstrated that restorative justice programs produce positive effects for both victims and offenders, including the reduction of recidivism,” Alderman Zielinski said. “The City of Milwaukee Youth Council’s initiative seeks to create a community-based and youth-centered alternative to existing, formal juvenile justice processes for certain young first-time offenders – something that is badly needed in our city.”

The advisory board would be charged with developing and implementing the restorative justice initiative. Board members will include one member of the Milwaukee Youth Council, the Common Council President or the President’s designee, one member of the community with juvenile justice experience, appointed by the Mayor, one representative of Milwaukee Public Schools, appointed by the superintendent, one member of the Milwaukee Police Department, appointed by the Chief of Police, the director of the city Community Development Grants Administration, or the director’s designee, and the presiding judge of the Milwaukee Municipal Court or his/her designee.

According to the Legislative Reference Bureau, each year, the Milwaukee Police Department issues thousands of in-school municipal citations to youth for ordinance violations, and during the 2014-2015 school year, 88% of in-school youth citations were issued for truancy, disorderly conduct and possession of marijuana. Many juvenile citations are not paid, leading to juvenile warrants, juvenile judgments and the suspension of juvenile driver’s licenses, and of the 1,932 juvenile judgments in 2014, 1,053 (54.5%) resulted in driver’s license suspensions.

-30-