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ROBERT G. DONOVAN

ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

MPD and DA must vigorously pursue charges following threats to officer

Statement of Alderman Bob Donovan August 17, 2016

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel has reported that someone has posted to social media the identity of the Milwaukee Police officer who shot and killed Sylville Smith in a confrontation on Saturday. This has resulted in hundreds of internet threats against this officer.

I support this officer, and I stand by him in what must be a scary and difficult time for him. I also steadfastly refuse to identify this officer. I believe the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's decision to publish his identity has increased the danger that he and his family already faced from those who have threatened their well-being.

I will reserve my final opinion regarding the officer's actions on August 13 until all the evidence has been presented and reviewed. However, based on the information available today, I believe the officer acted professionally during an altercation with an armed individual who has a lengthy criminal past, and that the officer's actions were necessary to preserve his own life and the public's safety.

I can only assume that the Milwaukee Police Department and the District Attorney are vigorously pursuing charges against the individuals responsible for these threats and will prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law. Under Wisconsin state statutes, battery or threats to a judge, prosecutor or law enforcement officer are worthy of a Class H felony charge. If this sort of investigation is not already underway, I am seriously disappointed, and I am strongly urging the officials responsible to get on with it.

Finally, it's become common knowledge that the officer involved is African American. We as elected officials are constantly bombarded by requests to increase the number of African American officers in our police department. Well, in this officer we have an answer to those requests; how's he being treated by our community?

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