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ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

Abele's "asinine" comment regarding Public Safety Action Plan way off base

**Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan
September 6, 2016**

Typically I would not comment on an individual who over the years I've given little thought to, but since as reported last night on the CBS 58 newscast, County Executive Abele referred to the Common Council's proposed Public Safety Action Plan as "asinine" I feel compelled to do so.

Let me begin by saying this: The Public Safety Committee that I chair was charged with the responsibility of reviewing, analyzing and making recommendations to improve policing and the criminal justice system within the City of Milwaukee. No more, no less.

Period. End of story.

That's what we were asked to do and that's precisely what we delivered on. Plans involving jobs and economic development, youth programming, education, and community engagement will be forthcoming.

Now I can certainly understand the County Executive's desire to deep six this plan because it sadly points out some glaring deficiencies in his own administration. But to call the plan "asinine" is a bit overboard.

So, let's take a deep breath, a step back, and a closer look.

Is it "asinine" to want to hold criminals accountable for their own criminal behavior? Is it "asinine" to want more beat cops patrolling our neighborhoods on foot or bike? These same officers -- day in and day out -- getting to know the very people they are protecting and vice versa. After all, studies indicate there is no better way to improve police-community relations.

Is it "asinine" to want a local, better managed secure detention facility for our youth as an alternative to Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake?

-More-

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Is it “asinine” to want to target in on the worst of the worst when it comes to gun violence – all in an effort to get these individuals off our streets and to end this senseless carnage?

Is it “asinine” to want and call for a high level of safety by addressing street drug dealing, prostitution and reckless driving – some of the everyday things tearing at the very fabric of our once proud neighborhoods?

All of these issues are included in our plan, and of course none of it is “asinine.” You know it, and I know it.

So let me tell you what is “asinine.”

It’s asinine for some public officials to continue to embrace public policies and pander to special interests.

It’s asinine for the County Executive to implement and even expand upon policies and procedures without any clue as to the success or failure of those same policies (sadly, this was pointed out to the committee by his own staff!).

It’s asinine for the County Executive to support policies that jeopardize the safety of our citizens by placing repeat, chronic offenders on ankle bracelets and GPS tracking only to see these individuals commit more crimes and bring additional terror and trauma to our neighborhoods.

It’s asinine for the County Executive to trash a plan when in all of his years in office he’s never offered one of his own (other than to continue with policies that have actually contributed to the very mess that we are trying to clean up). He is satisfied with the status quo; I am not.

Something else is “asinine” and it’s this: That this community continues to elect – as C.S. Lewis would say – “Men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise.”

And finally, this, too, is “asinine”: That the County Executive forgot the sage political advice he ought to live by...

“It’s better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid than open up and remove all doubt.”