
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

March 30, 2017

Ald. Bob Donovan
(414) 286-3778

MEDIA ALERT

Council members seek help from Governor on juvenile justice system

The homicide of City of Milwaukee DNS special enforcement inspector Greg “Ziggy” Zyszkiewicz last week is but one of the most recent in a long line of deaths and violent crimes caused by Milwaukee juveniles and young adults who have been in and out of the juvenile justice system for years – a dramatically broken juvenile justice system, according to **Alderman Bob Donovan** and **Alderman Mark A. Borkowski**. Now those two aldermen, the chair and vice-chair of the Common Council’s Public Safety Committee, respectively, have asked **Governor Scott Walker** (see the **attached** letter) for help in expediting needed changes to reform the system.

In part, the jointly signed letter states: “You have consistently shown yourself to be a leader unafraid of controversial positions and policies if you thought them in the best interests of Wisconsin. **In that same spirit, we ask you to undertake a thorough audit and eventual reform of the state’s juvenile justice system. This has, for us, become a matter of the highest priority, a view shared by many of our Common Council colleagues and the residents we represent. It is to be acknowledged that this is no small undertaking, but the circumstances demand no less.**”

Alderman Donovan said he has heard a steady call from people across Milwaukee that a juvenile justice system revamp can no longer be delayed. “Sadly, our current juvenile justice system has, with few exceptions, become little more than an undergraduate course for violent criminals,” he said.

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CITY OF MILWAUKEE

City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202 • www.city.milwaukee.gov

March 24, 2017

The Honorable,
Governor Scott Walker
115 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker,

You have likely heard that, earlier this week, one of the City of Milwaukee's finest special enforcement inspectors, Greg Zyskiewicz, was murdered while on the job. Only a few weeks from retirement, Mr. Zyskiewicz was an exemplary employee, a devoted servant of the community, and a beloved husband, father, and grandfather. His loss is deeply felt.

It now appears that his death came at the hands of a group of people, ages 16 to 21, who took Mr. Zyskiewicz's life as part of a failed car-jacking attempt. All of the suspects are described as having criminal records.

We serve as the chair and vice-chair of the City's Public Safety Committee. Throughout the Summer of 2016, the Committee undertook a lengthy series of hearings to inform recommendations for the improvement of public safety. These hearings resulted in a plan that was made and remains broadly available and which we all hoped would help direct future initiatives in this area. One of its recommendations called for a thorough audit and reform of the state of Wisconsin's juvenile justice system.

The plan acknowledged that all the good work of residents and the officers of the Milwaukee Police Department to apprehend juvenile offenders goes for nothing if district attorneys, courts, probation and parole officers, and other agencies merely return unrepentant offenders to the streets. The juvenile justice system at times seems unaware that criminals are hardening younger, are increasingly disrespectful of authority, and have been enabled in a distrust of law enforcement that borders on disregard. It seems unaware that not only Milwaukee but communities throughout Wisconsin have seen increases in crimes committed by juveniles that grow from disorder like vandalism, vehicular theft, and, yes, car-jacking.

You have consistently shown yourself to be a leader unafraid of controversial positions and policies if you thought them in the best interests of Wisconsin. **In that same spirit, we ask you to undertake a thorough audit and eventual reform of the State's juvenile justice system. This has, for us, become a matter of the highest priority, a view shared by many of our Common Council colleagues and the residents we represent. It is to be acknowledged that this is no small undertaking, but the circumstances demand no less.**

Should you ever require our assistance or have questions, please feel free to contact us at your convenience.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Robert G. Donovan in black ink.

Ald. Robert G. Donovan
8th District
Chair, Public Safety Committee

Handwritten signature of Mark L. Borkowski in black ink.

Ald. Mark L. Borkowski
11th District
Vice-Chair, Public Safety Committee