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CHANTIA LEWIS
ALDERWOMAN, 9TH DISTRICT

Invest on the front end and avoid huge costs on the back end

Statement of Alderwoman Chantia Lewis May 15, 2017

Last week (Tuesday, May 9) the Common Council passed a resolution encouraging leaders in the State Legislature to consider a different approach to public safety. The approved package of recommendations (**attached**) calls for the Legislature to consider going beyond reforms to the juvenile justice system and increasing penalties for certain crimes. It calls on our state legislators to also make investments on the front end so that more Wisconsin citizens can not only avoid incarceration, but can live a life without contact with the corrections system.

I co-sponsored the legislation because I believe strongly that we need to change our focus to prevention and key investments in our fellow citizens and neighbors, and especially in our children. I will go to Madison to testify at the Capitol for our package because I believe strongly that we need to proactively invest in quality education including early childhood education, and trauma informed care. We need to continue the efforts to connect underserved and underemployed individuals with better living wage jobs that can provide hope while helping to stabilize families and neighborhoods.

I believe that individuals who commit crimes need to be sanctioned, but I also believe we need to do a much better job preventing the conditions and/or paths that lead people to consider poor choices in the first place.

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Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Substitute resolution relating to the City of Milwaukee’s position on County, State and Federal legislation intended to reduce incarceration and violence.

Sponsors: ALD. KOVAC, ALD. STAMPER, ALD. PEREZ, ALD. HAMILTON, ALD. JOHNSON, ALD. LEWIS, ALD. BAUMAN

Indexes:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Tally
4/18/2017	0	COMMON COUNCIL	ASSIGNED TO		
4/24/2017	0	JUDICIARY & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE	HEARING NOTICES SENT		
5/1/2017	0	JUDICIARY & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE	RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION	Pass	4:1
5/1/2017	1	CITY CLERK	Sponsor added		
5/9/2017	1	COMMON COUNCIL	ADOPTED	Pass	13:1

170091
SUBSTITUTE 1

ALD. KOVAC, STAMPER, PEREZ, HAMILTON, JOHNSON, LEWIS AND BAUMAN
Substitute resolution relating to the City of Milwaukee’s position on County, State and Federal legislation intended to reduce incarceration and violence.

This resolution seeks introduction and passage of legislation at County, State and Federal levels to both reduce the incarceration of Milwaukee residents and to reduce violence in Milwaukee. The City also supports a set of guiding policies as a means of both reducing the incarceration of Milwaukee residents and reducing violence in Milwaukee.

Whereas, The number of adults incarcerated in Wisconsin State correctional facilities increased from 6,967 in 1990 to 22,729 in 2016, a 226% increase, while the overall population of Wisconsin increased during the same period by only 17%; and

Whereas, African-Americans comprise 6.6% of Wisconsin’s population but 42% of the men and 24% of the women incarcerated in Wisconsin State correctional facilities; and

Whereas, As of the 2010 U.S. Census, 12.6%, or one in 8, African-American working-age men in Wisconsin were incarcerated, nearly double the 6.7% average rate in the United States, while at the same time the rate of incarceration of working-age Caucasian men in Wisconsin was virtually identical to the average rate across the United States, at 1.2%; and

Whereas, 69% of the African-American residents of Wisconsin reside in Milwaukee County; and

Whereas, According to a report by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, between 1990 and 2012, 26,222 African-American men from Milwaukee County were incarcerated in Wisconsin State correctional facilities; and

Whereas, Incarceration disrupts families and communities, and a record of incarceration is a significant barrier to subsequent employment; and

Whereas, County, State and Federal funds would be better invested in crime and violence prevention than in incarceration and punishment; now, therefore be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the City of Milwaukee seeks introduction and passage of legislation at County, State and Federal levels to both reduce the incarceration of Milwaukee residents and to reduce violence in Milwaukee; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City supports the following guiding policies as a means of both reducing the incarceration of Milwaukee residents and reducing violence in Milwaukee:

1. Doing away with mandatory minimum sentences and returning to sentencing discretion, which allows judges to bring the full force of the criminal justice system to rehabilitate offenders, rather than to lock offenders away regardless of circumstance.
2. Treating youths who offend, especially first-time offenders, as deserving of compassion, help and intervention rather than as hardened criminals deserving of being locked up.
3. Reforming the juvenile justice system in Milwaukee County to ensure that youths are receiving sufficient and appropriate counseling, rehabilitation, alternative rehabilitation and other supportive measures prior to and after adjudication, as well as minimizing any procedural delays between initial arrest and adjudication.
4. Ending the practice of sending Milwaukee's serious juvenile offenders to Lincoln Hills School, a troubled facility more than 200 miles away from Milwaukee youths' families, communities and support networks, and instead detaining serious juvenile offenders in a local setting for rehabilitation.
5. Increasing cooperation and information-sharing between the Police Department, other City agencies and Milwaukee County partners to ensure that the Police Department is supported in its mission; this should include information-sharing between:
 - Trauma-informed care specialists
 - Public health professionals
 - The Office of Violence Prevention
 - Mentor programs
 - Educators
6. Re-prioritizing the State budget to decrease the share of funding that is sent to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and re-direct those funds into departments and

programs that work to prevent crime and violence, including health, education, housing, public transit expansion and job development.

7. Re-focusing State and local bodies, including the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, on recruiting and growing businesses that provide family-supporting jobs in the Milwaukee area, rather than along the Milwaukee-Kenosha I-94 corridor.
8. Expanding and improving public transit options for Milwaukee residents between Milwaukee and family-supporting jobs located in the surrounding counties.
9. Increasing the amount of shared revenue returned to the City from the State to a level which would cover the City's police and fire department budgets, as was historically the case.
10. Increasing federal Community Development Block Grant funding, which helps the City to expand economic opportunities for residents, and creating a state fund to supplement federal Community Development Block Grant funding.
11. Reforming the State of Wisconsin's voucher school program so that voucher schools are held to the same quality of education standards as public schools, ensuring that the City's children attending voucher schools receive the quality education that they are entitled to, and that will allow them to achieve their highest potential.
12. Bringing back a full complement of courses in music, the arts, and technical training to public schools in the Milwaukee area so that youths receive a complete, well-rounded education.

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April 28, 2017