

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIR

- Public Safety

MEMBER

- Public Works
- Steering and Rules
- Anti-Graffiti Policy



ROBERT G. DONOVAN

ALDERMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

Is MPS Truly Willing to Stand Against Hate?

Teacher Travis Sarandos must be held accountable for his despicable public remarks

Statement by Ald. Robert G. Donovan

February 5, 2020

The Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) system makes much of the importance of inclusion, tolerance, diversity, and mutual respect. How, then, can it countenance the remarks made by Travis Sarandos, a teacher at the Milwaukee School of the Arts, via his Twitter account?

Shortly after political commentator Rush Limbaugh told his listeners he had been diagnosed with advanced lung cancer, Mr. Sarandos took to Twitter and told his 1,323 followers he was glad. "(R)ush limbaugh absolutely should have to suffer from cancer," he wrote in a post as lacking in proper English usage as it is in fact. "(I)t's awesome that he's dying, and hopefully it is as quick as it is painful."

Not content to confine his rage to pundits, Mr. Sarandos earlier despaired for our collective future absent the extinction -- the extinction, mind you -- of Christian conservative voters. As a possible remedy to their presence in the voting public he suggested, "...maybe we poison the communion wine?"

Likely realizing he had been found out by WISN radio's Mark Belling, Mr. Sarandos, as of last evening, had taken down his Twitter page. It would be easy enough to dismiss ill-written, juvenile nonsense like this were it not for his role in teaching our City's young people. He is supposed to be an example of the inclusive, tolerant, and respectful spirit of the Milwaukee Public schools. He is clearly nothing of the sort. And he did not make his remarks in private. He made them on one of the most public of platforms where any of his students could easily have seen them.

In a referendum question on the Spring ballot, the MPS system will shortly be asking all Milwaukee residents to raise their taxes for its benefit. Its representatives must surely know that one of the questions many have about approving this referendum is whether the system will be good stewards of the money provided. If the MPS system is aware of Mr. Sarandos' statements and has taken no corrective action, it is hard to make the case that it has its own house in order.

Mr. Sarandos' remarks deserve discipline. In the meanwhile, he has no business in an MPS system classroom.

-30-