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CAVALIER JOHNSON
COMMON COUNCIL PRESIDENT
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

Continued gun violence underscores the need for change

Statement of Common Council President Cavalier Johnson May 3, 2021

Last night after I put my children to bed like so many other parents and caretakers, I mourned for those who lost their lives in the mass shooting that took place in Green Bay. While I had those victims on my mind, a barrage of bullets flew just blocks away. I've lived in some of the hardest hit neighborhoods in this city, and this was the longest sustained series of gunshots that I have ever heard in my life.

While parents and caretakers had sorrowful thoughts of those who were killed just north of us, we then had to turn our attention to check on our own family members. In this state, far too many people have easy access to guns that shouldn't, and unfortunately this episode isn't the first time that this issue has been brought to the forefront in Wisconsin.

Midtown Center is the economic heartbeat of the 2nd district and after this event I wondered if shopping patterns would change and patrons would switch to the next closest mall - Mayfair in suburban Wauwatosa. They probably won't feel any more comfortable there because Mayfair Mall recently had a mass shooting of its own. Maybe they'd go down to Kenosha County, but that community recently suffered a mass shooting too.

These incidents come on top of recent shootings in 2021 at Roundy's in Oconomowoc and at the Fox River Mall in Grand Chute. These follow separate mass shootings that took place in 2020 in Milwaukee at Molson Coors and on the near north side. Before these, there were well documented mass shootings in recent years in Brookfield and Oak Creek within the last decade.

With continued inaction on guns, Wisconsin is increasingly becoming known for beer, cheese and mass shootings.

Even more disappointing than the lack of urgency to protect the citizens of Wisconsin from individuals who would tear our communities apart is the fact that the people who irresponsibly pulled triggers at Midtown Center last night endangering everyone else's families are probably at home asleep and those who know what happened will say nothing. That silence effectively leaves the door open for these individuals to continue pulling triggers in our neighborhoods and jeopardize the safety of more Milwaukee families.

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I would implore anyone with information on this shooting to contact Milwaukee Police at (414) 935-7360 or Crime Stoppers at (414) 224-Tips or the P3 Tips App, and always make sure to alert the police should you see any nefarious activity in your neighborhood.

When it comes to voting, politicians strike as quick as lightning to reform the system so that one bad actor can't cheat. I wish, along with the people of Wisconsin from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River, that they had that same energy when it comes to one bad actor getting their hands on a gun and cheating Wisconsin residents out of their quality of life, and their actual lives.

We are long past the time for action. Reform must happen now to protect the lives of our residents, and I hope this is something we won't have to debate.

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