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ALDERMAN, 7TH DISTRICT



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Sterling Brown settlement requires that MPD adopt weapon drawn reporting

Statement of Alderman Khalif J. Rainey April 27, 2021

I am pleased to learn that the settlement reached with the city in the case of former Milwaukee Buck Sterling Brown includes a requirement that a report be filed any time a Milwaukee Police officer draws or displays a firearm during an arrest or seizure.

The requirement would be a change to MPD standard operating procedures, and it is part of legislation which I sponsored and which was approved by the Common Council in July 2020 (CCFN #200267). The “weapon drawn” legislation specifically referred to each instance of a firearm, pepper spray/ball, taser or baton drawn or displayed in the line of duty by an MPD officer.

According to the settlement document, seven of the MPD standard operating procedures or SOPs are required to be changed by the Fire & Police Commission. The SOPs are key because they govern officer behavior with regard to training, the use of force, field interviews, arrest authority, body cameras, personnel investigations and general police practices.

It is sad but also a move closer to justice that the SOP changes had to come in a legal settlement from a case where officers (on camera) clearly mistreated Mr. Brown and overreacted and escalated tensions at the scene.

My sincere hope is that the SOP changes will help to identify officers who excessively draw weapons when responding to calls in the community, resulting in the unnecessary escalation of tensions at scenes and harming what fragile (and frayed) police – community relations exist currently.

I believe that by requiring police officers to file a report every time they draw a gun while on duty, the Milwaukee Police Department will be able to better provide information to the public and these additional incident reports would hold officers accountable and allow them to reflect on the incident that occurred.

Lastly, this issue is especially important to the Black community and other people of color who are at a higher risk of experiencing excessive force by a police officer. The incident reports would be another tool for the Fire and Police Commission when conducting investigations of officer misconduct.

My ultimate hope is that the change can help ensure that we don’t see any further cases like the one brought by Mr. Brown.

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