



José G. Pérez
City of Milwaukee Common Council

Youth crime is reaching a tipping point

Statement of Common Council President José G. Pérez
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In recent weeks the city, and my district, has seen a rash of robberies, car break-ins, and similar crimes that are a detriment to the quality of life for those who live in and visit the area. Among them, a small business owner being robbed taking out the garbage, and a woman being robbed at gunpoint after a night of family and fun.

The common thread in many of these incidents is that they are being committed by young people who are barely even teenagers.

On a daily basis, I receive inquiries from residents wanting to know what we are going to do in response. People telling me that they both live in the city, and love Milwaukee for its many amenities, but that if things don't change soon, that they'll consider moving due to safety concerns.

It feels like we have reached a tipping point, and it is clear that the approach we have right now for holding these youth accountable for their actions isn't working. We must do a better job of identifying these young people who are prolific offenders, and take the proper steps to ensure that they don't continue to commit these egregious acts.

People should not have to fear a robbery or carjacking when they are out for a meal, to shop, or take in another form of entertainment. If these crimes continue unabated, it can affect our commerce, quality of life for residents, and ability to grow our city, a topic we have spent much time discussing of late. I fear that regardless of how much revenue we obtain from the new sales tax, or how many new housing units we construct, if people don't feel safe in Milwaukee...it will all be for naught.

I will be working with the Chair of the Public Safety and Health Committee to get updates and answers from all relevant parties including, but not limited to, The Milwaukee Police Department, The District Attorney's Office, and representatives from our court systems to determine what we can do to combat this recent "surge" in crime. Statistically, violent crime appears to be down in some categories across the city and nation as a whole. That's good news that should be applauded. However, the number of calls and emails that I've received regarding criminal acts are up sharply over the past month. We must continue to find creative ways to address youth crime on both the front and back ends of the spectrum.

In the meantime, I want to encourage residents that when they see something suspicious, to say something by calling the MPD non-emergency number at 414-933-4444. Additionally, I implore residents to call 9-1-1 when they witness a violent incident. Together, we can work to make progress in our city and reduce crime.

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