
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

July 23, 2008

Ald. Bob Donovan
(414) 708-2096

Alderman Asks For Citizen Court Monitoring

Unprecedented Plea for Volunteers From Public Safety Chair Comes As City Learns of Released Felons' Roles in Quadruple Homicide, Bank Robberies; News Conference Set For Thursday

Convinced that rarely opposed local judges have almost completely lost touch with community expectations on punishment and sentencing, **Ald. Bob Donovan** is calling for Milwaukee citizens to join in a citywide Court Watch initiative to get involved in court outcomes by pushing judges for tougher criminal sentencing.

Ald. Donovan, chair of the Common Council's Public Safety Committee, will outline his call for volunteer citizen court monitors during a news conference at 11 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday, July 24, 2008) in the third floor Council Chamber Anteroom at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.

Ald. Donovan has long advocated and supported Court Watch efforts for cases in his district and on the city's south side. But, after learning that the individuals in the July 4 quadruple homicide case were convicted felons whom the alderman said "committed crimes that should have kept them safely behind bars," he decided it was time to ask for volunteers to make the program permanent and citywide.

"The decent citizens of our community deserve to be protected from these career criminals, but they are being let down by a system that is failing them while letting the crooks off the hook," he said.

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Alderman Calls For Full Court Watch/ADD ONE

“We in Milwaukee County have a weak link in our criminal justice system and it is very clearly our judges and our corrections system,” he said.

The alderman said volunteers who would be willing to commit a few hours each month to attend court cases “could clearly make a difference and influence judges’ decisions on the severity of the sentences handed down.”

Another recent case cited by Ald. Donovan involves a 46-year-old Cudahy man who – after serving just 16 months for a bank robbery related offense – committed one bank robbery the day he was released from prison and a second one just days later before being apprehended by police.

“These clowns and thugs are released from prison after serving ridiculously short sentences and start committing crimes almost immediately,” Ald. Donovan said.

“If I made decisions that ultimately ended up throwing city services into chaos, I would be tossed out of office, “ he said. “These judges are routinely throwing our neighborhoods into chaos by releasing dangerous criminals onto our streets before they’ve been even remotely punished for their crimes. I firmly believe this would not occur if citizens were there, in court, personally holding them accountable and even sharing personal accounts of the harm these criminals have caused or could cause in their neighborhoods.”

The alderman said he believes many elected judges in Milwaukee County feel immune to public accountability because they often never face an opponent. “Common Council members – myself included – and other elected officials routinely meet with residents and constituents to hear what their concerns are and to find out firsthand the conditions they have in their neighborhoods,” he aid.

“Rarely – if ever – have I seen our elected judges out listening to the people,” he said.

Prospective Court Watch volunteers are asked to call Ald. Donovan at 414-286-3778.