

# Statement of Ald. Bob Donovan

## October 1, 2007

I would like to publicly thank all of the Milwaukee police officers who were mentioned in yesterday's *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article regarding police overtime pay. In my opinion these individuals have the most difficult job imaginable, yet they do their work with a high level of skill and professionalism, commitment and personal sacrifice on a daily basis. This community should be deeply appreciative of their efforts.

In particular, I would like to personally recognize the work of detectives Timothy Heier and Erik Gulbrandson. I happened to be eating lunch about a block away when Shaina Mersman, a pregnant teenager, was shot at S. 19<sup>th</sup> St. and W. National Ave. as she crossed the street with a young man who was the intended victim. Because of the hard work and skill of these two Milwaukee detectives, that double murder and several other high profile homicides have been solved.

I also want to thank the *Journal Sentinel* for pointing out the fact that our police department continues to shoulder its substantial workload with more than 200 vacant officer positions. Despite all of the rhetoric about police officers and public safety coming from Mayor Barrett, officer vacancies in the police department are higher today than when the mayor assumed office more than three years ago.

As a city we will continue to see substantial police overtime costs until we start shrinking the number of vacant police officer positions. As chairman of the Common Council's Public Safety Committee, I am focused squarely on doing what I can to address our officer shortage, and I am proposing four new classes of police officer recruits for next year. I will do all I can to make sure those classes are approved and that they receive all of the training and preparation they'll need. Also, as I've said before, public safety involves both the fire department and the police department, and I will not support reducing the capacity of our fire department to help pay for the additional police officers.

###