
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Bob Donovan
(414) 286-3778

Mayor Continues To Duck Real Issues Strangling Milwaukee, Alderman Says

*Ald. Donovan Dumbfounded Public Safety, Schools and Taxes Left Out of State of City
Speech*

It's no wonder key media coverage of Mayor Tom Barrett's 2008 "State of the City" address has focused on the mayor's call to bring back the Great Circus Parade, according to Ald. Bob Donovan.

The speech delivered today didn't have enough other issues of substance for reporters to highlight, Ald. Donovan said.

"I love the Circus Parade – don't get me wrong – but I'm deeply disappointed that the mayor continues his avoidance of the real issues most impacting Milwaukee and its residents: crime; broken schools; and high taxes and diminished services," he said.

Public Safety

Ald. Donovan, chair of the Common Council's Public Safety Committee, said the mayor highlighted commissions, studies and other items in his speech "yet we all know that forming committees isn't the answer to reducing crime."

"I support Police Chief (Edward) Flynn and I've also been working to fill the hundreds of police officer vacancies we face, because when it comes to cutting crime we know that there is no substitute for putting officers on the streets," Ald. Donovan said.

Our Schools

The near riot yesterday at Bradley Tech shows "the level of dysfunction" that plagues Milwaukee Public Schools, he said.

"I'm calling again – again – on Mayor Tom Barrett to take bold and decisive action that the citizens of this city are entitled to," the alderman said, referencing his call last fall for the mayor and Governor Jim Doyle to take over MPS.

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The “Real” State Of The City/ADD ONE

Ald. Donovan said Milwaukee taxpayers are pouring “billions of dollars into a school system that is broken.” “Despite the best efforts of some very good and dedicated teachers and staff, MPS is foundering and failing because it is also home to some very poor teachers and administrators,” he said.

“We can’t continue to keep pouring good money after bad into MPS,” the alderman said. “The taxpayers of Milwaukee deserve better.”

Taxes & Services

Ald. Donovan said Milwaukee continues to have one of the highest property tax rates in the nation because – in part – there is “no political willpower or creativity to diversify our revenue sources.”

“Our property owners are besieged by high taxes because we are wedded to the property tax,” he said. “The mayor doesn’t seem to have the ability to make the case in Madison for other sources of revenue, and the taxpayers of Milwaukee continue to send their hard-earned money to Madison without getting anything in return.”

Despite paying high taxes, residents and businesses don’t receive the services they deserve, he said. “Look at all of our potholes, our overflowing garbage carts, and our crumbling infrastructure,” he said.

Uncertain Future

If the mayor of Milwaukee will not address the city’s top three priorities – public safety, schools and taxes/services – then the city will continue to have a hard time competing for businesses and growth with peer cities, Ald. Donovan said.

“If we can address those three key areas and get on top of them and make the improvements and changes that are necessary, then development will follow and we won’t have to entice businesses with all sorts of perks, credits and giveaways just so they think about opening their doors here,” he said.