

Statement of Ald. Bob Donovan

September 5, 2007

Enough Is Enough!

13 Shootings & Two Homicides Over Labor Day Weekend: Where's the Outrage?

Once and for all it's time to fill the vacant police officer positions on the Milwaukee Police Department so our city doesn't have to endure another holiday weekend where citizens are faced with dodging bullets whenever they venture out of doors.

The sad reality is that despite all of the rhetoric about 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 chairman of the Common Council's Public Safety Committee, I have an obligation to do all that I can to ensure that our citizens are being protected from crime and violence to the greatest extent possible. Can I ensure that every citizen is issued a Kevlar vest? No, but I can darn well make sure that our streets and neighborhoods have an adequate level of police presence and law enforcement activity.

To this end **I am proposing four new classes of police officer recruits for next year.** I vow to 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, public safety involves both the fire department and the police department, and we can't 'rob Peter to pay Paul.' In other words I will not support reducing the capacity of our fire department to help pay for the additional police officers.

Very simply, given the degree of violence and disorder in the community, we need these officers on our streets sooner rather than later. Police presence can deter crime, and despite our best efforts it appears that the current number of officers patrolling our streets is simply inadequate.

-More-

I also strongly support extending and expanding the Neighborhood Safety Initiative, which has been very successful in controlling criminal activity and violence in targeted patrol areas this summer. In fact I recently experienced this initiative in person during a ride-along with officers in one of Milwaukee's toughest neighborhoods. I have great respect and admiration for their professionalism, their hard work and their dedication. I applaud Ald. Michael Murphy for spearheading the effort to continue this vital initiative for several more weeks this year, and I vow to help guide efforts to also expand it in the coming year.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not castigate the elected public officials who represent many of the areas where these shootings have been taking place. There is a deafening silence, quite frankly, in the African American community – the very community most affected by the deadly violence – and I find it mind-boggling that the individuals representing the most affected areas are perhaps the most silent and are also the ones who consistently vote against efforts to step up enforcement and to add more police officers. It is time for these ‘leaders’ to stand up and do something about what is and has been ripping their neighborhoods apart.

I'm calling upon all of the decent citizens of Milwaukee – people from all races, backgrounds and nationalities – to stand up and say “Enough Is Enough!” **Contact the mayor and your alderman and demand that the police vacancies be filled and order restored to our streets.**

###