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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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May 16, 2007

Ald. Tony Zielinski  
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## Alderman: Police Could Really Use Anti-Loitering Law This Summer

With Police Chief Nannette Hegerty announcing Tuesday that officers involved in stepped-up patrols in certain city neighborhoods this summer will be talking to “suspicious people” who draw attention to themselves, Ald. Tony Zielinski said he plans to re-introduce his anti-gang loitering ordinance.

Ald. Zielinski, chief sponsor of the ordinance, said it gives police the ability to be proactive while keeping city streets safe this summer. “Timing is everything, and if ever there was a time to give police such a useful tool in their work in some of our toughest neighborhoods – now is that time,” he said.

The anti-gang loitering ordinance – drafted after the mob beating of Samuel McClain in December 2005 – was narrowly defeated in early 2006 when Common Council members rejected it by an 8-7 vote. Ald. Zielinski, who modeled the ordinance after one being used in Chicago, said Mayor Tom Barrett threatened to veto it and swayed some members to vote against it. The alderman said he’s now calling on the mayor to support the ordinance, which he’ll re-introduce at the May 30 Council meeting.

“Had (the mayor) supported it last year, our officers may well have had this tool at their disposal for over a year,” Ald. Zielinski said.

“If he supports Chief Hegerty’s initiative and the questioning of ‘suspicious people,’ then I believe he should also be supporting a measure that gives our officers the ability to proactively stop gang members for loitering and terrorizing good people in our neighborhoods,” he said.

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## **Re-Intro: Anti-Gang Loitering Ordinance/ADD ONE**

Ald. Zielinski, a member of the Council's Public Safety Committee, said criminal street gang members avoid arrest by committing no offense punishable under existing laws when they know police are present, but they maintain control over certain areas by loitering and intimidation. "That's the problem with current city laws, in that police can't use the law to disperse groups unless they are observed breaking specific laws," he said.

In the early 1990s the city of Chicago passed an anti-gang loitering law after many citizens complained that they were being terrorized by the activities of street gangs. During the time the law was enforced, more than 43,000 arrests were made.

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