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Ald. Robert G. Donovan
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Public Safety Committee Passes Aggressive Anti-Violence Proposal

*Similar Campaigns Have Worked in Boston & Oakland; Initiative Would Enlist Help
of State & Federal Authorities*

An aggressive Common Council proposal that calls on Mayor Tom Barrett and Police Chief Nan Hegerty to utilize local, state and federal help in developing a plan to significantly reduce violence in the city was passed 4-1 today in committee.

Ald. Bob Donovan, chair of the Council's Public Safety Committee and the chief sponsor of the proposal, said the measure calls on the Mayor and the Police Chief to develop a hard-hitting anti-violence campaign similar to ones that have been implemented in Boston, Oakland and High Point, North Carolina. The alderman said the issue now goes to the full Common Council for a final vote on Sept. 26.

"I believe this initiative, if it's modeled correctly after what has been done in those other cities where it's worked, can substantially reduce violent criminal behavior on the streets of Milwaukee," said Ald. Donovan, noting the measure currently has nine co-sponsors.

In the other cities, authorities targeted 150 or so individuals believed to be involved in and/or responsible for much of the violent crime. Offered help in finding gainful employment, career development, substance abuse counseling and other assistance – but told consequences such as intense police scrutiny and surveillance, the full weight of federal prosecution and enhanced sentences awaited them if they refused to reform – many of the hardened criminals decided to straighten up.

"We have to try this (approach), because what we've been doing isn't working and we are running out of options," he said.

Ald. Donovan said co-sponsors currently include Ald. Robert J. Bauman, Ald. Jim Bohl, Ald. Joe Dudzik, Ald. Michael S. D'Amato, Ald. Tony Zielinski, Ald. Robert W. Puente, Ald. Ashanti Hamilton, Ald. Terry Witkowski and Ald. Joe Davis, Sr.