



January 27, 2006

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## Newly Approved Changes To State Law Enable City To Tow, Impound Unregistered Vehicles

### *New Changes to Law Close Loophole, Will Help Keep Streets Clear of Unregistered and Unlicensed Vehicles; News Conference Set For Monday*

After several years in the making, the state Legislature has given final passage to a change in state law that will allow municipalities to tow and impound vehicles that are unregistered and/or unlicensed – something that was nearly impossible to do under the pre-existing law, according to Ald. Bob Donovan, who sponsored a Common Council resolution back in 2000 asking for the change in state law.

On January 24 the state Senate passed 2005 Assembly Bill 240, which was originally introduced by 9<sup>th</sup> District Rep. Josh Zepnick. Importantly, changes included in the approved bill now allow city parking checkers to have a vehicle that is found to be unregistered and/or unlicensed towed or impounded – something not allowed under the pre-existing state law. “We were really needing a tool to help us keep our streets from getting clogged up with nuisance vehicles,” said Ald. Donovan, who represents the densely populated 8<sup>th</sup> Aldermanic District.

“With the help of Representatives Josh Zepnick, Tim Carpenter and Mark Honadel, as well as Senator Alberta Darling, we now have that critical tool and we can assure law-abiding citizens that we’ll be able to keep their streets from looking like junk yards,” said Ald. Donovan, chair of the Council’s Public Safety Committee.

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## **Towing Unregistered Vehicles/ADD ONE**

Ald. Donovan noted that the legislators and officials who worked on getting the changes passed come from different areas and points in the political spectrum. "This is a prime example of different levels of government working together in a bipartisan effort to improve our neighborhoods," said Ald. Donovan. "That's how government is supposed to work."

**The law change and what it will mean for Milwaukee neighborhoods will be discussed during a news conference at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, January 30, 2006, at the City of Milwaukee Tow Lot, 3811 W. Lincoln Ave. Sen. Darling and Reps. Zepnick, Tim Carpenter and Mark Honadel are also expected to participate. The news conference will be held in a garage where towed vehicles are processed. News media coverage is invited.**

Under the former state statute/local ordinance, the narrow language made it impossible for a municipality to tow an unregistered vehicle because the vehicle had to "reasonably appear" to have been unregistered for 30 days.

The bill approved on January 24 (and now awaiting the signature of Governor Jim Doyle) changed the definition of "unregistered motor vehicle" so that it applies to any motor vehicle located upon a highway that is not displaying valid license plates, or a temporary operation plate, among other factors/criteria.