

Milwaukee Ald. Donovan: Per capita Milwaukee's homicide rate on par with Chicago's

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Statement from Milwaukee Alderman Bob Donovan

While the national media has been focused on Chicago's recent skyrocketing gun violence and murder rate, the sad reality is that 90 miles to the north Milwaukee is going through the same deadly crisis.

According to statistics from our Legislative Reference Bureau, although we are four times smaller than Chicago, Milwaukee so far in 2018 is on par with Chicago in terms of homicides per 100,000 residents and based on 2017 population estimates.

According to the LRB so far this year in Chicago there have been 318 homicides, or 11.7 per 100,000. So far this year in Milwaukee there have been 69 homicides or 11.6 per 100,000.

I'm told Milwaukee is on pace - sadly - to have the deadliest month of August in city history!

As a resident of Milwaukee my entire life this saddens me greatly. I remember a Milwaukee not all that long ago that was considered America's safest big city.

What has happened to Milwaukee?!

This problem has been festering for years.

I ran across a letter to the editor that was published in the *Journal Sentinel* last year that struck me. In part, it stated: "Seniors, as well as other property owners, are

afraid to sit on their front porches, day or night, and certainly don't go out after dark. People think twice about driving through certain neighborhoods and try to find alternate routes to their destination or don't make the trip at all."

That's very telling.

The reality is these problems aren't going to be meaningfully addressed by words, fluff or more rhetoric. Calls by the mayor to put the guns down and stop the violence are laughable – just ask the bad guys perpetrating all of the crimes.

Apparently the mayor feels making public demands to stop the violence is enough to fulfill his obligations as the leader of this city.

Nor are these problems going to be addressed by adopting the Office of Violence Prevention's suggestion, urging our good citizens to intervene in conflicts in their neighborhood. The Good Samaritan citizens might just end up with a bullet themselves.

In my estimation the mayor needs to take the following steps – steps he should have taken years ago:

- 1) The Mayor needs to level with the citizens of Milwaukee as to how serious this issue really is.
- 2) The Mayor needs to immediately adopt and begin implementing the 2016 Public Safety Plan put together and supported by certain members of the Common Council.
- 3) The Mayor needs to immediately meet with the Governor and establish a partnership between the state and the city to immediately address our public safety issues.
- 4) The Mayor needs to fashion a strategy that encompasses all segments of the community and one that needs to – at the very least – include the following categories:
 1. a)Public Safety
 2. b)Economic Development
 3. c)Jobs
 4. d)Housing

5. e) Youth and Education
6. f) Community Engagement
7. g) Health

5) It is critical that all hands be brought on board – federal, state and local government, the private sector (businesses and individuals), and the philanthropic community.

Again, these are, at the very least, the starting points. Now it's up to the Mayor.

The mayor needs to realize that words and rhetoric are no substitute for action and results.

If the mayor proves unwilling or unable to take these very preliminary steps for the sake of our city and the future of our neighborhoods, he needs to step down.