

ACLU of Wisconsin: To Milwaukee Common Council - “No weapons of war for Milwaukee Police Department”

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MILWAUKEE – The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin called on the Common Council to reject a Milwaukee Police Department bid for several military weapons for use during the Democratic National Convention, including a variety of rubber and plastic bullets, tear gas, a gas tactical delivery system and pepper spray.

Chris Ott, Executive Director of the ACLU of Wisconsin, issued this statement:

“Seeking to purchase these weapons, especially at the volume and variety requested, is alarming, particularly in light of a largely scaled down DNC. While it is important that the Milwaukee Police Department provide security during the DNC, officers don’t need tanks, tear gas and rubber bullets to do it. The MPD has a spotty history in its response to protests, and these weapons were clearly misused during the Floyd protests in June, when they escalated the situation rather than diffusing it. Purchasing these weapons raises the likelihood that these items will be deployed against our community again. People exercising their First Amendment rights should not be met with violence, especially by those sworn to protect them.”

“The Fire and Police Commission made it clear Monday, when its members advised Chief Morales that they want the MPD to create a policy to discontinue its use of tear gas during protests, that the MPD must improve its relationship with the community. This bid by the MPD, however, makes us fear that the Department has learned nothing from the backlash generated by its inappropriate reaction to

peaceful protestors, and instead are reloading for more of the same. The Common Council must ensure that the MPD is not in a position to repeat the harm caused during recent protests, and prevent the MPD from obtaining weapons of war to use against our community.”

This statement is available online at: <https://www.aclu-wi.org/en/news/aclu-wisconsin-milwaukee-common-council-no-weapons-war-milwaukee-police-department>