

Rep. Ohnstad: Statement on recent events in Kenosha

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KENOSHA – After a second night of tumult and turmoil in Kenosha last night, Representative Tod Ohnstad (D-Kenosha) provided the following statement:

“Let me be clear. This needs to end. The devastation we have witnessed the past two nights is completely unacceptable. I believe we must condemn the arson and violence we have seen this week in the same manner we condemn the excessive use of force and widespread injustices the public has rightfully mobilized against. One wrong does not justify another.

There is reason to believe much of the criminal behavior witnessed has come from individuals from out of town. For most from our community, recent days have been consumed by despair and anger as a horrible event has been compounded by long nights of fire and fear. This is our hometown and we cannot allow meaningful, peaceful protests to be hijacked to harm the very community they aspire to strengthen.

I have been in constant contact with Mayor Antaramian, County Executive Kreuser, Governor Evers, and others to plan and prepare for the nights to come and strongly advocated for additional National Guard deployment and a state of emergency declaration. The nights of burned out cars, glass shards, and rubble must end.

On Monday I joined Attorney General Josh Kaul for a briefing about the process going forward to investigate the shooting of Jacob Blake. Kaul confirmed that the investigation will be timely and thorough. All aspects of the legal community and leadership have made clear they will work to ensure justice will be served.

Wisconsin was the first state in the nation to require an independent agency

investigate officer-involved shootings. However, evidence shows many more reforms are needed, and Governor Evers has called a special session of the Legislature and proposed a series of reforms on police training and accountability. I also call on the Legislature to act immediately on these important proposals.

Finally, our thoughts remain with Jacob Blake and the Blake family as we hope for his recovery. I am particularly appreciative of the request from Jacob's family members that the protests surrounding the shooting remain peaceful. We need to make sure that one tragedy does not turn into any more."