

U.S. Rep. Sensenbrenner: Letter to Mayor Barrett regarding police availability for DNC

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Washington, D.C. - Today, Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (WI-05) sent the following letter to Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett regarding the number of police available for the upcoming Democratic National Convention (DNC) being held in Milwaukee in August:

July 31, 2020

The Honorable Thomas Barrett
Mayor of the City of Milwaukee
City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Room 201 Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Mayor Barrett:

I write to you today concerning the security situation for the upcoming Democratic National Convention (DNC) being held in Milwaukee in August. Recently, the situation regarding the number of police officers that will be available for securing the convention has taken a dire turn.

As you know, your Fire and Police Commission gave Milwaukee Police Chief Alfonso Morales a directive on July 20, 2020 to “discontinue the use of chemicals” in their standard operating procedures when dealing with civil disturbances. While I am open to scrutinizing a police department’s use of force in any given community, this directive comes at a concerning time for the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD).

Ever since the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, and the protests the incident sparked, there has been a shift from peaceful demonstrations to violent riots across

the country. Milwaukee has not been immune to that shift. The MPD has attempted to balance the right of peaceful protests with the protection of public and private property.

While I understand the Commission wants to bring reforms to MPD, the consequences of their directives are having repercussions for the security of the DNC. As of July 28th, there have been over 100 police agencies renegeing on their commitments to send police officers to Milwaukee for the convention. These agencies have stated that their decision to not send these officers was, in part, the Commission's directive ordering police in the city to stop using tear gas to control crowds. The decision by these outside police agencies has led to Milwaukee being understaffed and, I fear, unable to provide adequate protection for the attendees of the DNC and Milwaukee as a whole.

In light of this, I am requesting that you take aggressive action in order to bolster your police force and ensure that your officers have the necessary tools to keep the convention and your city secure from future civil unrest.

I wish you the best of luck at putting on a safe and successful convention for the city of Milwaukee.

Sincerely,

F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress