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Goodwin Calls for Comprehensive Jail Reform in Milwaukee County

MILWAUKEE, WI — State Representative Russell Antonio Goodwin Sr., candidate for Milwaukee County Executive, issued the following statement calling for comprehensive reform of Milwaukee County's jail system.

"The allegations that a 17-year-old was victimized while in custody at the Milwaukee County Jail demand answers and full accountability. I'm praying for him and his family. They deserve answers, and I trust the ongoing investigation will help establish what happened. When someone is in our custody, their safety is our responsibility.

"In the upcoming legislative session, I'll push for a better way to handle cases involving 17-year-olds. We can protect public safety and respect the rights and dignity of young people in custody. That includes housing 17-year-olds separately from adults.

"Milwaukee County also has work to do. For decades, our jail system has struggled with staffing, security, and overcrowding. As County Executive, I'll make hiring and retaining qualified officers, improving mental health care, and strengthening suicide prevention priorities in my county budget.

"I'll work with the sheriff to ease overcrowding at the downtown jail. That starts with making more space and resources available for people awaiting trial at the Community Reintegration Center in Franklin. We should review the transfer criteria so more eligible people can be safely housed there. We should also consider expanding electronic monitoring for eligible people convicted of nonviolent offenses who have demonstrated good conduct.

"Long term, I'll explore bringing both facilities under one correctional authority, with clearly defined roles for the County Board, County Executive, and Sheriff. A unified structure could help us deploy staff where they're needed, coordinate housing and security across both facilities, and bring overtime costs under control.

"Changes to oversight and funding would require action by the County Board and could also require action by the State Legislature. I've served at both levels of government, and I'll use that experience to move these reforms forward. Our responsibility is to make Milwaukee County's jails safer for the people in our custody and for the officers who work there."

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Paid for by Goodwin For Milwaukee County Executive