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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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A Quorum Or A "Gang"?

Youth Council Calls Special Meeting To Weigh In On Proposed Anti-Gang Loitering Ordinance; Common Council Takes Up Issue Tuesday

Knowing that a proposed city ordinance meant to address street and neighborhood loitering by gang members and others will overwhelmingly impact Milwaukee teens and young adults, the City of Milwaukee Youth Council isn't going to sit on the sidelines and just observe while the debate unfolds.

In fact, several members of the Youth Council have already attended community meetings on the proposed ordinance hosted in recent days by members of the Common Council who have convened public meetings in order to hear residents' and young people's opinions on the matter. Knowing full well that the Youth Council's votes are advisory only, it is the consensus among Youth Council members that it is important for the body to vote on the ordinance so that the Common Council is aware of how it is viewed by the representative body of Milwaukee's youth.

The Youth Council will hold a special meeting at 5 p.m. on Monday, February 27, 2006, in the third floor Council Chamber at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St., to vote on the proposed anti-gang loitering ordinance. The 15-member council will be presented with two resolutions pertaining to the ordinance. The public and media are invited to attend.

The Common Council's Public Safety Committee last week voted 4-1 to recommend approval of the loitering ordinance. The full Common Council will take up the ordinance during its regular meeting at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, February 28, 2006, in the Council Chamber.

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Youth Council To Vote On Loitering Ordinance/ADD ONE

Sponsored by Ald. Tony Zielinski, the ordinance has received the support of the Milwaukee Police Department and several Common Council members, who say it would allow police to ticket people who loiter in what is called a “menacing” fashion in specific areas designated as ones plagued by gang activity. Many supporters say the ordinance can be another tool to deal with groups of youth that hang out on streets and intimidate residents.

The ordinance’s detractors – including several members of the Common Council - - say such a law could be used to harass people based on stereotypes and racial profiling, and that currently police officers can’t and shouldn’t be trusted to properly enforce it.

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