

Statement of Ald. Mike McGee, Jr.
November 2, 2006

Today, the Common Council's Finance and Personnel Committee voted unanimously to provide the Fire and Police Commission with one (1) independent monitor and two (2) independent investigators. Following the PARC Commission Study, this legislation allows for the framework to be set up that establishes these new positions. I would like to thank co-sponsors Common Council President Willie Hines, Alderman Michael Murphy, and Alderman Michael D'Amato for their willingness to put egos aside and effectively collaborate on a plan that I believe will improve the much maligned Fire and Police Commission.

I believe the message sent to the citizens of the City of Milwaukee is that we as their representatives truly care about the ineffectiveness of the current system of police accountability. While the new positions of Independent Monitor and Independent Investigator do not offer a panacea to the epidemic of police brutality, we must take strategic, incremental steps to ensure both the safety of our citizens and the accountability of police officers.

The vision that I have for the Independent Monitor is one of a fair and competent professional who will provide reports regarding the effectiveness of the Fire and Police Commission, and conduct investigations of citizen complaints regarding alleged police misconduct. While the Independent Monitor is not considered to be a long-term position, I believe that we need to continue the review of the Fire and Police Commission in the same scope and framework recommended by the PARC Commission's Report.

The Independent Investigator's role would be activated by citizens who are dissatisfied by the initial findings of the Milwaukee Police Department's investigations of alleged police misconduct. Currently, citizens are not allotted any relief or an additional complaint appeals process when an alleged act of misconduct is not found to be present during the police department's investigation. The investigator's role, while not completely defined, will be crafted once the positions are approved of at future Finance and Personnel Committee hearings.

I would like to thank and give a congratulations to Mayor Tom Barrett, the Greater Milwaukee Coalition of Pastors, the Milwaukee Commission On Community and Police Relations, as well as Justice For Jude and Justice For All for their commitment towards fighting for justice and substantial changes in the way Milwaukee handles issues of police brutality.

###