



BE A FORCE

Milwaukee Police Department
Police Administration Building
749 West State Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233
<http://www.milwaukee.gov/police>

Edward A. Flynn
Chief of Police

(414) 935-7200

January 7, 2016

Alderman Terry L. Witkowski, Chair
Public Safety Committee
200 East Wells Street – Room 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202

RE: SCHOOL BUS ORDINANCE - FILE #150648

Dear Chairman Witkowski:

During the November 12, 2015 Public Safety Committee meeting, the members of the Common Council requested that opposition to the display of warning lights/signs by school buses be justified. This letter comes to confirm that the Milwaukee Police Department remains opposed to the passage of this substitute ordinance. The proposed ordinance would require bus drivers to extend their stop sign while loading and unloading passengers.

Concerned parties supporting the proposed ordinance site anecdotal stories of children being hit or nearly struck near buses. Our records do not support their claims. They believe this ordinance could prevent injuries to school aged children who are transported via bus.

Traffic data has been examined and it does not indicate that safety would be increased by the use of school bus warning lights and stop signs while loading and unloading passengers. In fact, it may become more dangerous. Under the current practice, Milwaukee Public School students are trained not to cross in front of the bus. Rather, they wait until the bus has cleared before crossing the street. This allows the child to have an unobstructed view of traffic. The proposed ordinance would require bus drivers to utilize the stop sign for each stop. The child may, therefore, have a false sense of security that it is safe to cross the street in front of the bus. In addition, Milwaukee Public School buses currently make over 89,000 stops per day. If enacted, this ordinance would cause remarkable congestion on our roadways. This congestion would likely, directly or indirectly, cause accidents since motor vehicles would be forced to stop in traffic or may attempt to avoid the stopped buses.

Some individuals are under the belief that this ordinance is antiquated and that large municipalities across Wisconsin have enacted similar legislation. During the November meeting, testimony from a bus company representative indicated this is not the case. The City of Madison, which was used as an example, does not require the use of the stop signs due to the problems associated with using them in an urban environment.

As Chief of Police, I share concerned for both the safety of school-aged children and motorists traveling on Milwaukee's streets. I encourage you to table this ordinance since it would cause unnecessary burdens and fail to enhance public safety.

Sincerely,

EDWARD A. FLYNN
CHIEF OF POLICE