



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

June 28, 2007

Honorable Common Council
City of Milwaukee
Room 205, City Hall
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Dear Members of the Common Council:

I am signing Common Council File 070335, a substitute ordinance related to loitering by criminal gang members.

I have given serious consideration to the complexities of the ordinance, the fact that existing law provisions are currently enforced, and to the opinions offered by both opponents and supporters.

The issues of profiling and aggressive policing are serious concerns for me, members of the Common Council and residents. I have had conversations with the Chief of Police and she is as sensitive to the issues raised as I am.

The ordinance, as passed, has a very narrow application.

The limitations and complexities related to the enforcement and prosecution of the ordinance have been outlined by the City Attorney [City Attorney letter to the Common Council, February 1, 2006]. Because of the issues raised by the City Attorney, the Chief of Police will provide training specifically related to the provisions contained in the ordinance to members of the police force. Enforcement of the ordinance will be done primarily by members of the Gang Intelligence Unit and Anti-Gang officers.

The Milwaukee Police Department's Gang Intelligence Unit and Anti-Gang officers are focused on breaking up criminal gangs and have strong working relationships with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. The Chief has deployed the Unit and Anti-Gang officers for assignment in the Neighborhood Safety Initiative's designated areas. The Gang Intelligence Unit has arrested 125 gang members so far this year. In 2006, 466 gang members were apprehended and known gangs were disrupted or dismantled.

In and of itself, this ordinance will not solve all the serious crime issues we face.

The enforcement of this ordinance will be centrally focused on gang members and illegal gang activity; both serious issues and the cause of too much violence and neighborhood disruption.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tom Barrett
Mayor