
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Willie L. Hines, Jr.
Ald. Terry Witkowski
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Milwaukee Needs Community Service Officers, Task Force Says

Final Report Recommends Use of Civilian Employees to Free Sworn Police Officers for Violent Crimes

The final report of the Community Services Staffing Task Force, chaired by Ald. Terry L. Witkowski, calls on the Common Council to pass enabling legislation to create the community service officer position. The CSO would be a civilian position in the police department that responds to non-emergency calls for service, traffic control, traffic incidents and other matters not requiring an armed sworn officer.

In attempts to bridge growing gaps between the City of Milwaukee Police Department and the community it serves, the Common Council has investigated numerous avenues for supplemental policing efforts and budgetary relief. "At a time when we are asking residents to pay more in taxes, we cannot offer them less in services," said Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr. "We must also look at the most cost effective and efficient way to deliver safety services to our residents," added Ald. Hines.

The Task Force report offers the city some good alternatives, said Ald. Hines, and will be considered during the next meeting of the Common Council's Steering and Rules Committee, which is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Thursday, June 29, 2006, in room 301-B of City Hall, 200 E. Wells St. Media coverage is encouraged.

"This is our opportunity to offer better service for our taxpayer dollars," said Ald. Hines, adding "we owe it to the public."

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Community Service Officer/ADD ONE

Ald. Hines said the Milwaukee Police Department's annual operating costs in 2006 will devour \$209 million or 99% of the city's \$211 million tax levy. "That is a huge chunk, especially when you consider that the department's budget is just a hair under the total levy that is collected on *every* taxable property in the City of Milwaukee," he said.

"It is incumbent upon us to search for and find new and creative ways to deliver services to the residents of the city," said Ald. Hines.

Ald. Witkowski said CSOs would, at a minimum, continue the same level of safety services in the city. However, he said it is likely that the CSOs would actually help provide enhanced safety services at a lower cost.

"This civilian position would perform a vital role in the day-to-day operations of the department by allowing sworn police officers to remain focused on handling violent crime incidents and investigations involving homicides, armed robberies, shots fired, sexual assaults and the like," said Ald. Witkowski.

Studies of departments throughout the country and in Wisconsin have shown that the benefits of a community service officer program are valid and have proven to be effective. The concept and principles of a CSO are approximately 40 years old.

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MEDIA ADVISORY:

Both Ald. Hines and Ald. Witkowski will be available to discuss these positions further with members of the media. Contact Ald. Hines at 286-3591, and Ald. Witkowski at 731-0472.