June 4, 2014

The Honorable Scott Walker
Governor of Wisconsin
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker,

Data from the Wisconsin Department of Corrections indicated that of the 2,399 state registered sex offenders living in Milwaukee County as of February 20, 2014, 89% lived in the city of Milwaukee. It is evident that the legislation enacted by Milwaukee County communities restricting residency for sex offenders is having a disproportionate impact on the city of Milwaukee.

I am concerned that the inaction to date by the Wisconsin Department of Corrections to address the inequitable placement of sex offenders is an indication that it does not yet fully appreciate the negative impacts on the health, safety and welfare of Milwaukee residents that have resulted from the varying residency restriction laws in Milwaukee County communities now in effect—only Hales Corners, Milwaukee, River Hills, Shorewood and Whitefish Bay have no restrictions.
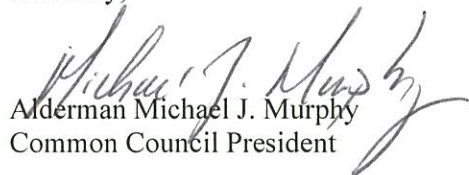
The City of Milwaukee is gravely concerned that the state's current system for the placement of sex offenders will cause the continued concentration of sex offenders residing in the city of Milwaukee. As a result, the Milwaukee Common Council is currently considering its own legislation restricting the residency of sex offenders within the limits of the city.

At this point, I am not entirely convinced that adding to the patchwork of local restrictions is the best long-term solution to this problem. However, absent the enactment of state law requiring that sex offender residency restrictions be applied statewide, few, if any, better options are immediately available.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to direct the Department of Corrections to temporarily suspend the placement of sex offenders within the city of Milwaukee until a fair and equitable statewide system for the placement of sex offenders can be established.

I look forward to working together on this matter.

Sincerely,

Alderman Michael J. Murphy
Common Council President