



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

July 28, 2014

Edward F. Wall
Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Corrections
3099 E. Washington Ave.
P.O. Box 7925
Madison, WI 53707-7925

Dear Secretary Wall:

On July 23, 2014, the City of Milwaukee Common Council passed an ordinance relating to residency restrictions for sex offenders. The ordinance restricts sex offenders from residing within 2,000 feet of any location designated by the city as a place where children are known to congregate. The ordinance recognizes the dangerous and unnecessary burden the State of Wisconsin has placed on Milwaukee families.

Due to inaction by state government and negligence by the Department of Corrections (DOC), today I signed the sex offender residency restrictions ordinance into law.

This is not the first time this issue has been considered in Milwaukee. In 2007, a sex offender residency restriction ordinance was considered, but did not become law after DOC officials spoke about the need for statewide uniformity and assured the City that they would be working with the legislature. It now appears that “work” never occurred.

Fourteen of the eighteen other municipalities in Milwaukee County have enacted residency restrictions. Because state law directs placement by county, these restrictions have led to an over concentration of offenders in the City of Milwaukee including individuals who did not previously reside here or did not commit their offense here.

Earlier this year, the City Clerk conducted an open records request on the DOC sex offender registry database. A comparison of two City zip codes, with current numbers and numbers from a 2007 open records request, revealed a 45% increase in sex offenders living in those neighborhoods. In addition, the

City's legislative reference bureau uncovered an unacceptable number of errors, misspellings and misinformation on sex offenders' contact information.

A committee of the Milwaukee Common Council held a hearing on June 12, 2014, where no representative from DOC attended to testify. DOC representatives did meet with city officials on July 9, 2014. Following that meeting we contacted the DOC in writing. To our disappointment, the majority of our concerns that were clearly listed in that letter and previous letters have not been adequately addressed. Common Council President Michael Murphy has sent multiple letters to you, Governor Walker, and Director of the Sex Offender Program Grace Roberts. He also reached out to Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen.

As a result of the failure of state government to address these issues, Milwaukee must act to protect its residents even though a great amount of control is held at the state level within the DOC.

Our analysis of the state's procedures has uncovered several other glaring deficiencies that affect public safety throughout Wisconsin. Along with our concerns about the growing number and concentration of sex offenders in Milwaukee, no reasonable person can agree that:

- A dangerous sex offender should only be tracked by a 10-day letter notice sent via regular mail.
- A notification of a release of a sex offender to law enforcement that is more than a few days ensures the highest level of safety for WI families.
- 19 registry specialists to track over 23,000 registered sex offenders in Wisconsin, in a department with over 10,000 employees and with a budget of \$1.3 billion is a good use of limited resources.

Milwaukee continues to see an increase in the release of Chapter 980 sex offenders into our city. This is occurring despite the fact WI State Statute s. 301.03 (19) directs the DOC to "subject to sub. (20), work to minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the residential population density of sex offenders, as defined in s. 302.116 (1) (b), who are on probation, parole, or extended supervision or placed on supervised release under s. 980.06 (2) (c), 1997 stats., s. 980.08 (5), 2003 stats., or s. 980.08 (4) (g)."

The individuals being placed in our City have committed State crimes. They have been prosecuted by State prosecutors. They have been tried before State judges. They have been incarcerated in State facilities. The State can no longer wash its hands of them and make believe it is a local issue. It is time for the State to act responsibly.

Sincerely,



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Cc: Governor Scott Walker
Milwaukee State Legislative Delegation
Milwaukee Common Council