



Legislation Text

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170091
SUBSTITUTE 1

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Substitute resolution relating to the City of Milwaukee's position on County, State and Federal legislation intended to reduce incarceration and violence.

This resolution seeks introduction and passage of legislation at County, State and Federal levels to both reduce the incarceration of Milwaukee residents and to reduce violence in Milwaukee. The City also supports a set of guiding policies as a means of both reducing the incarceration of Milwaukee residents and reducing violence in Milwaukee.

Whereas, The number of adults incarcerated in Wisconsin State correctional facilities increased from 6,967 in 1990 to 22,729 in 2016, a 226% increase, while the overall population of Wisconsin increased during the same period by only 17%; and

Whereas, African-Americans comprise 6.6% of Wisconsin's population but 42% of the men and 24% of the women incarcerated in Wisconsin State correctional facilities; and

Whereas, As of the 2010 U.S. Census, 12.6%, or one in 8, African-American working-age men in Wisconsin were incarcerated, nearly double the 6.7% average rate in the United States, while at the same time the rate of incarceration of working-age Caucasian men in Wisconsin was virtually identical to the average rate across the United States, at 1.2%; and

Whereas, 69% of the African-American residents of Wisconsin reside in Milwaukee County; and

Whereas, According to a report by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, between 1990 and 2012, 26,222 African-American men from Milwaukee County were incarcerated in Wisconsin State correctional facilities; and

Whereas, Incarceration disrupts families and communities, and a record of incarceration is a significant barrier to subsequent employment; and

Whereas, County, State and Federal funds would be better invested in crime and violence prevention than in incarceration and punishment; now, therefore be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the City of Milwaukee seeks introduction and passage of legislation at County, State and Federal levels to both reduce the incarceration of Milwaukee residents and to reduce violence in Milwaukee; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City supports the following guiding policies as a means of both reducing the incarceration of Milwaukee residents and reducing violence in Milwaukee:

1. Doing away with mandatory minimum sentences and returning to sentencing discretion, which allows judges to bring the full force of the criminal justice system to rehabilitate offenders, rather than to lock offenders away regardless of circumstance.
2. Treating youths who offend, especially first-time offenders, as deserving of compassion, help and intervention rather than as hardened criminals deserving of being locked up.
3. Reforming the juvenile justice system in Milwaukee County to ensure that youths are receiving sufficient and appropriate counseling, rehabilitation, alternative rehabilitation and other supportive measures prior to and after adjudication, as well as minimizing any procedural delays between initial arrest and adjudication.
4. Ending the practice of sending Milwaukee's serious juvenile offenders to Lincoln Hills School, a troubled facility more than 200 miles away from Milwaukee youths' families, communities and support networks, and instead detaining serious juvenile offenders in a local setting for rehabilitation.
5. Increasing cooperation and information-sharing between the Police Department, other City agencies and Milwaukee County partners to ensure that the Police Department is supported in its mission; this should include information-sharing between:
 - Trauma-informed care specialists
 - Public health professionals
 - The Office of Violence Prevention
 - Mentor programs
 - Educators
6. Re-prioritizing the State budget to decrease the share of funding that is sent to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and re-direct those funds into departments and programs that work to prevent crime and violence, including health, education, housing, public transit expansion and job development.
7. Re-focusing State and local bodies, including the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, on recruiting and growing businesses that provide family-supporting jobs in the Milwaukee area, rather than along the Milwaukee-Kenosha I-94 corridor.
8. Expanding and improving public transit options for Milwaukee residents between Milwaukee and family-supporting jobs located in the surrounding counties.
9. Increasing the amount of shared revenue returned to the City from the State to a level which would cover the City's police and fire department budgets, as was historically the case.
10. Increasing federal Community Development Block Grant funding, which helps the City to expand economic opportunities for residents, and creating a state fund to supplement federal Community Development Block Grant funding.

11. Reforming the State of Wisconsin's voucher school program so that voucher schools are held to the same quality of education standards as public schools, ensuring that the City's children attending voucher schools receive the quality education that they are entitled to, and that will allow them to achieve their highest potential.
12. Bringing back a full complement of courses in music, the arts, and technical training to public schools in the Milwaukee area so that youths receive a complete, well-rounded education.

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