

## JOE DAVIS, SR.

Alderman, 2nd District

### CHAIR

- Community and Economic Development Committee
- Sister Cities Committee

### VICE CHAIR

- National League of Cities' International Council

### CO-CHAIR

- Black Male Achievement Advisory Council (BMAAC)



### MEMBER

- Public Safety Committee
- Public Works Committee
- Steering and Rules Committee
- Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation
- National League of Cities' Board of Directors
- National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials Board of Directors

### HONORARY CONSUL

- Republic of South Africa – State of Wisconsin

# Thanks for Hearing Me

## Statement from Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.

July 20, 2015

Once again, the City of Milwaukee has experienced weekend violence in our neighborhoods. This past week I released a statement (**attached**) challenging the Barrett Administration to address the City of Milwaukee's poverty rate, but it seemed that my voice fell on deaf ears. But since then, there have been several articles published in the *Journal Sentinel* on this topic of the direct correlation between poverty and crime, in particular violent criminal activity.

It is encouraging to see the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's willingness to step up to the plate and consider analyzing their funding priorities and targeting the issue of poverty in Milwaukee. And I am encouraged that there are now discussions on the rate of poverty in the City of Milwaukee (a rate that is unsustainable and that has had a direct impact on the criminal justice system) and its negative impact on the Black community. The discussions are finally taking place -- better late than never.

And this past week, Bishop Burt of Greater New Birth Church, Bishop McClelland of Holy Cathedral COGIC, and Pastor Davis of Greater Mt. Sinai Church COGIC all had events that expressed prayer for the City of Milwaukee in their own strategic way.

But what I'm most encouraged about is that Archbishop ListECKI has called for all who love Christ to come together for a Mass for Peace in our City. He has stated: "I don't have a solution. Sometimes, the Church has failed in thinking we know all the answers. Even our own presence as a Church in this city has diminished over the past 20 years. At times, many felt like they were alone in their struggles. But I want you to know this: the Church stands with you, next to you, alongside you. As Archbishop, I pledge to be with you."

Such words of comfort to me!

Father Tim Kitzke shared this with me in his statement: "Our hearts are breaking at the suffering faced by so many people because of violence, poverty, and joblessness." It is with this inspiration that I request the City of Milwaukee to adopt a strong faith-based initiative that will address the issues of poverty and its impact in the Black community. Too many people are dying on our streets and the overwhelming majority are Black people. I will not be silenced and will continue to say it is a race issue, as the data confirms this.

So although I may express many thanks to all of these Men of God that I referred to in this statement, I thank God for listening and hearing my prayers.

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# **And you expect me to remain silent?**

**Statement from Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.**

**July 13, 2015**

Why are we afraid to speak the truth about the homicide crisis that is impacting the City of Milwaukee's social and economic fabric? If a Black child from our community was six years old in 1994, here's what he or she experienced: the introduction of crack cocaine to our community through Ricky Ross on the West Coast during the end of the Reagan Administration; Gangsta Rap in the music industry; and the release of Nelson Mandela with the end of an apartheid system in South Africa.

That child in 2004 would now be 16 years old and faced with extreme social and economic challenges regarding poverty in Milwaukee that will, in all certainty, lead them to the unjustly criminal justice system. That same child now would be 27 years old and dying on the streets of our city because of gun violence (as would his little brother who was five in 2004 and now is 16 years old).

More than 85% of folks dying in Milwaukee to violence are Black and under 30 years old, and we know many Black children are being slaughtered also, kids in their early teens. So violence is not something that just started to happen; in my assessment it has grown due to a lack of will to provide a better standard of life for Black folks here in Milwaukee. In 2004, Milwaukee's poverty rate was around 26% and now we are the 2nd poorest city in the country only behind Detroit with a poverty rate of almost 30%.

So it's time for us to understand the economic facts and take control of this serious situation that has been neglected by Mayor Barrett. And don't fall for the excuse that "this isn't about race," because it is. On our streets of Milwaukee, Black folks are dying, Black children are dying, and the Black community is getting poorer.

And you expect me to remain silent?

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