



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

June 18, 2020

The Honorable, Members of the
Fire & Police Commission of the
City of Milwaukee
City Hall Room 706A

Honorable Commissioners:

The City of Milwaukee's Fire & Police Commission is one of the strongest and oldest civilian oversight boards in the country. As Commissioners, you have the responsibility of representing our city's residents and ensuring that they have access to the highest quality fire and police services possible. You also have the tremendous responsibility of protecting the rights and safety of residents served by these critical services. You are a very important voice for Milwaukee residents.

Our nation is having a needed reckoning with how policing reflects our values and goals as a society. We should and will continue to have a public discussion on how we can further our efforts to seek justice and create safety in Milwaukee.

We can and must take this opportunity to explore and pursue action to increase procedurally just policing in Milwaukee. In light of the horrendous killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, we all need to examine different police tactics. One of those tactics is the use of chokeholds. I urge you to move swiftly to revise Police Department Standard Operating Procedures to ban any use of chokeholds by Milwaukee Police Officers. Allowing chokeholds in police tactics creates a clear risk to the lives of citizens. These tactics needlessly increase the risk of death or disability in interactions with the police.

The Fire & Police Commission fills a critical role for civilian oversight that many other cities have identified as critical or missing. Our residents rely on the Commission to set expectations for how police authority is used and ensure it is used responsibly and fairly. Eliminating the use of chokeholds by Milwaukee's police officers is an important step to increase responsibility and reduce risk for citizens and police officers.

This will certainly not be the only discussion and action taken around use of force in policing. I look forward to working with you and our residents to improve public safety and policing in Milwaukee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Barrett".

Tom Barrett
Mayor