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CAVALIER JOHNSON
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

A Letter to the Fire and Police Commission

Statement of Alderman Cavalier Johnson
July 20, 2017

I would like to applaud the membership of the Fire & Police Commission for their action relative to the Milwaukee Police Department's non pursuit policy. It is my sincere hope that the directive issued to the Chief of Police results in greater awareness for those choosing to engage in reckless, careless action behind the wheel which endangers the overall public safety, that they will be held to account. The same holds true for those involved in the mobile drug market.

I am sharing a letter that I received from a business group in my district (**attached**) that remains staunchly opposed to the current policy. I am also sharing the text of a letter that I wrote to the Fire & Police Commission that became a part of the record at their most recent meeting.

My letter to FPC: I believe that while the Milwaukee Police Department's current pursuit policy was well-intended upon conception, there have been unintended consequences that negatively impact the overall public safety (and the perception of public safety) in the city of Milwaukee. I lived just down the street from one of the fatal accidents that served as "the straw that broke the camel's back" in creating the current policy and that incident was horrific. I say that to say that I am very sensitive to the reasoning why the policy was enacted in the first place.

But just because an idea is good at one time does not mean that stands the test of time.

Fast forward seven years into the future and we live in a city where people take stop lights as suggestions, where they treat stop signs as if they aren't even there, and yield signs might as well not even be posted into the ground. We live in a community where there is blatant and unprecedented disregard for traffic law. Like any other person observing this, one would surmise that while there may be a number a reasons why we have arrived at this poor state of respect for law and public safety, that chief among them is the now well ingrained knowledge that unless a violent felony has occurred, police officers in the city of Milwaukee are powerless to enforce the law on the streets that they are sworn to patrol, protect and serve.

The current policy does achieve two things at least – it lowers morale because our officers can't do their jobs and it emboldens people who would disobey traffic law and endanger public safety.

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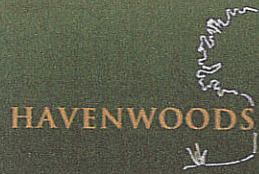
I know that the statisticians in the police department will argue that pursuits are up now from before the policy was enacted. That same data shows that the typical age of the person fleeing police has gone down. So now, we have younger, more impulsive drivers fleeing the police at higher rates than we did before the policy was enacted – likely attributed to the fact that these same perpetrators have in the back of their minds that police pursuit powers have been curtailed.

I'm just one of fifteen City of Milwaukee Alderpersons representing a constituency of over 40,000 people who are fearful getting behind the wheel to go about their day. Constituents who are fed up and simply want something done about the recklessness occurring daily on our streets without sanction.

Thanks,

Cavalier “Chevy” Johnson
Alderman, 2nd District | City of Milwaukee
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Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

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July 17, 2017

Milwaukee Police Chief Flynn
Police Administration
749 State St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Re: No Chase Policy

Dear Chief Flynn:

The members of the Havenwoods Business Safety committee have been discussing ways to keep the business district safe. An issue that has been surfacing is the lawlessness of drivers.

We have witnessed drivers running red lights, speeding on residential streets, speeding in the bike lane, passing from the parking lane and overall driving recklessly. As a result, our employees, vendors and customers have been in automobile accidents while doing business in our community.

The Havenwoods community is home to over 300 businesses that aggregately employ over 5000 people and has a combined property value of \$203,958,700.00. There is an annual investment of \$200,000.00 in our Business Improvement District #31. The Havenwoods community has seen over \$20,000,000.00 in economic development in this past decade. It is imperative that we maintain investor confidence to sustain this community. If our workforce and customers are unsafe it will be a threat to the progress we've made and Milwaukee's future.

As your community partner we understand the many challenges our law enforcement faces in reducing crime. The lack of resources, our criminal justice system, poverty, etc. all feed into the lawlessness we are witnessing. However, we feel strongly that criminals are feeling emboldened in their lawlessness because of the No Chase Policy in Milwaukee. We would ask that this policy be re-evaluated and potentially reversed.

Sincerely,

Havenwoods Business Safety Committee

Copy:

Mayor Tom Barrett
Alderman Hamilton
Alderman Lewis
Alderman Johnson
Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission

Steve Hentzen; Hentzen Coatings and BID Board Member
Tim Jarecki; HellermannTyton
Cliff DeTemple; Turning Point
Ken Cook; Ken Cook Company
Keith Raskin; Prestige Auto Works: BID Board Member
Julie McNamara; TJM Innovations
David Deluka; Stano Landscaping
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