

Statement of Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr.
March 14, 2007

In my estimation, there is no public service job that is more important to the safety and wellbeing of the City of Milwaukee and her citizens than that of police officer. That being said, I also contend that no one is above the law. For this reason, I applaud and commend Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm for his actions to start the process of creating, restoring and improving the consummation of the critical relationship between the Milwaukee Police Department and the community at large.

It is important to note that isolated incidents cannot and should not be allowed to define the entire department. However, if those isolated incidents become more frequent or severe, they will raise great concerns. We can ill afford to compromise the law in any branch of service, and it is incumbent upon people like D.A. Chisholm to uphold the high standards of performance and professionalism that we rightly expect from police officers. The public must be able to rest assured that officers will operate within the letter of the law, and that there is a system in place to support them.

Apprehension and arrest should never call for criminal actions. The alleged actions on the night in question, and the resulting charges having to be brought forth by the District Attorney further destroy the fabric of positive relations and proper delivery of services. I believe the primary quality that citizens and public officials are looking for is accountability. D.A. Chisholm has proven his commitment to focus necessary attention on ensuring that members of the department are held accountable. The expectations of our police officers are quite simple: delivery of professional services, protect and serve the community, be personally committed to the sworn oath of being an officer, and maintaining an honorable code of conduct. These duties are understood and carried out daily by the great majority of our city's finest.

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