



David A. Clarke Jr.
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Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

NEWS RELEASE

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Sheriff Clarke Calls on DA and Chief Judge to Suspend Soft Criminal Justice Practices Pending a Thorough Independent Review

Milwaukee, WI – Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. is calling for the suspension of all social engineering criminal justice experiments for all Part I Offenses, until a credible and independent study of the last five years of these decisions can be conducted. These offenses include robbery, sexual assault, aggravated assault, burglary and felony drug dealing, to name just a few of Part I crimes as classified by the FBI. Statement from Sheriff Clarke:

These cruel social engineering experiments using human subjects, come with appealing names like deferred prosecutions, restorative justice, second chance, community corrections, alternatives to incarceration and a claim of smart-on-crime.

This is not smart on crime. It is stupid. It discriminates against an overwhelming majority of black, law-abiding residents. These experiments lead to watered-down sentences in exchange for plea bargains, personal recognizance as bail for heroin dealing, and stayed sentences leading to probation.

The latest arrest of an 18-year-old suspect with a long criminal history involved in the shooting of a 10-year-old girl on a playground, is just the tip of the iceberg. It is the latest in what has been years of soft-on-crime practices by the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office and the Milwaukee County Circuit Court. They have contributed to high rates of recidivism and bloodshed in the City of Milwaukee despite their rhetorical claims of success.

This is not a knee-jerk reaction. I have been calling attention to this revolving door justice system for the last five years, only to be attacked and criticized by criminal advocates, soft-on-crime criminal justice practitioners and the local newspaper. I fully expect that to happen again, but I will not be deterred until these cruel experiments stop.

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Several weeks ago, two suspects who committed armed robberies near Marquette University in downtown Milwaukee, were shown to have received slaps on the wrist for previous serious Part I crimes. They were placed back into the community to terrorize college students.

This community has been fed nothing more than anecdotal claims of success, aided by an accommodating media that will not peel back the layers on these self-serving claims, nor will they subject these false claims to rigorous standards of analysis. The result is that we continue to see the benefactors (career criminals) of this soft approach sent back into the community to repeatedly kill, maim, shoot up neighborhoods, take property by force, deal drugs and generally wreak havoc all over again.

Calling for new laws is nothing more than denying the fact that current criminal justice practices are failing miserably. This is wallpapering over the real problem of prosecutorial and judicial leniency. This has to stop today.

I am calling on Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm and Milwaukee County Chief Judge Jeffrey Kremers to voluntarily and temporarily suspend these failed programs until an honest, objective, review can be conducted by credible criminal justice researchers skilled in analysis. The researchers should not come from UW-Milwaukee, the Criminal Justice Council or Justice Point 2000, as they have assisted in the design of these deadly experiments.

An independent study will help eliminate the myths about the cost of incarceration versus the economic advantages to locking up career criminals for longer periods of time.

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