

On Saturday, June 22, Community Brainstorming held their monthly forum that discusses issues affecting and surrounding Milwaukee's African-American Community. The Saturday forum provides a platform for interaction between policy makers and the community and affords an opportunity for the community to express its needs and expectations from a community perspective. The forum is held in a hall at St. Matthew's C.M.E. Church located off of W. Locust St, on North 9th St.

The topic for the panel discussion Saturday centered on the 2nd Amendment and the Black community in Milwaukee. Sheriff David Clarke was joined on the panel by former Wisconsin State Supreme Court Justice and Circuit Court Judge Louis Butler, attorney and former Milwaukee Alderman Fred Gordon and community activist and former urban radio talk show host Earl Ingram.

All four panelists gave intellectually based perspectives from their experience, education and expertise. Louis Butler gave a presentation on the historical and legal foundation of the 2nd Amendment while Fred Gordon presented on some legal and historical aspects, along with some personal insights on gun ownership in the black community. Earl Ingram gave some personal insights on his opposition to gun ownership in his family that goes back to his childhood, and Sheriff David Clarke presented commentary, data and analysis from a gun control and constitutional law expert from the University of Denver on why the concept of universal background checks, while an attractive-sounding phrase, will not solve the problem of gun violence plaguing Milwaukee neighborhoods. Clarke pointed to noted columnist George Will who said that on the idea of a universal background check system, it comes down to how many millions of dollars we want to spend to set up a new bureaucracy that will have no impact on reducing gun violence in this country.

Clarke also presented data on judicial leniency and cited the lack of any aggressive sentencing by Milwaukee County court judges for straw purchase (where someone who can pass a background check buys a gun for someone who cannot legally possess one) or felon in possession of a firearm convictions. Straw purchases have been identified by gun control advocates as needing more aggressive investigation and prosecution. Recently, Milwaukee Police Chief Ed Flynn, in testimony before a US. Senate Committee on a gun control measure, referred to straw purchase investigations as a "paper chase" and that he doesn't chase paper.

Clarke offered once again, as he has in the past, several proposals that would send a strong deterrent message to anyone who used a firearm in the commission of a crime. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (MJS) never picked up on these proposals because his ideas are not politically acceptable positions to their editorial board and thus their story writers.

Audience participation at Community Brainstorming, which is a prominent part of the forum, showed the wide array of positions, emotion, passion and opinions on gun control, gun possession and how to reduce gun crime that one would expect to find among any demographic.

Missing from the event was any extensive local media coverage. While disappointing it was not surprising. Sheriff Clarke started his presentation by asking how many media representatives were in attendance. Only Fox6 was there at the time, and they covered the forum in its entirety. Kudos to them. One other local TV station showed up during the forum, stayed long enough for a few sound bites and left. Apparently the rest probably figured that since there would be no drama associated with the event, like a fight breaking out that they could show footage of over and over again, they didn't think it was worth covering.

Noticeably missing at the forum was the MJS newspaper. They couldn't even bother to send an intern to cover this. This is the same newspaper that never misses an opportunity for biased coverage on Sheriff Clarke, including stories that have no value to readers. This would have been an opportunity for MJS story writers Dan Bice or Steve Schultze to get out of their chair, leave the office and actually go to street level and cover a story of importance facing the central city of Milwaukee. That, however, would go against their narrative of trying to depict the Sheriff as only catering to conservative audiences and talk radio, when in fact his message of personal defense was meant for and appeals to a broad and diverse audience. They wouldn't want that to get out now would they?

Noticeably absent as well was Bruce Murphy, a one-time prominent media person who was formerly employed by the MJS and was editor of Milwaukee Magazine before being dumped, who now writes some two-bit online blog where every other submission is an attack piece on the Sheriff.

Notice that these story writers always say that the Sheriff's office did not return our calls for comment in their devoid-of-any-objectivity hit pieces. In the case of Community Brainstorming, it is difficult for these three to cover a community event from the end of a telephone. Maybe they are afraid of venturing out to the area on Milwaukee's north side.

A recent Gallop poll indicates that trust in newspapers and local TV news has hit new lows.

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/06/18/majority-of-americans-dont-trust-newspapers-and-television-news>

Not only are traditional consumers finding their news from other sources, the Black community in Milwaukee has turned away from MJS and turned to the three urban newspapers to get what they believe to be more objective, accurate and fair news coverage about issues concerning the community.

<http://fox6now.com/2013/06/22/community-forum-addresses-the-right-to-bear-arms/>