



Curbing Reckless Driving

I want to commend Milwaukee's new city attorney, Evan Goyke, for holding a press conference on Tuesday to address reckless driving. The mayor, police chief, and other city officials joined Goyke to announce his office will no longer dismiss or amend reckless driving charges.

Hallelujah! Finally, we are seeing some leadership at the city-level to seriously curb the on-going epidemic of reckless driving, in not only Milwaukee, but also the surrounding communities and counties. An attitude of indifference to the safety of others has long-ruled the streets of Milwaukee because many of these perpetrators know they will not be held accountable for their reckless actions.

However, it is not all-good news. We need a united effort from all of our state's leaders and especially our judges. When I first met with Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson about increasing their sales tax last year, I lamented the fact that the fiscal issue was only part of the solution. Rampant crime is degrading Milwaukee and it bleeds out to the surrounding areas. We need to hold Milwaukee judges accountable for lax criminal sentencing. I encouraged the mayor to be more vocal because a vibrant Milwaukee helps our entire region and state. I am thankful the city attorney will no longer dismiss charges for those driving recklessly; we need our local judges to take note.

At the state level, I authored or co-authored four pieces of legislation relating to reckless driving that became law. [2023 Wisconsin Act 1](#) allows for the impoundment of vehicles used in reckless driving. [Act 9](#) increases fines and jail time for repeat offenders. [Act 86](#) provides grants to low-income students for driver education courses. Finally, [Act 226](#) increases penalties for those fleeing an officer. All of these bi-partisan laws seek to deter criminal behavior and encourage safe driving for the betterment of our society.

At a recent press conference for Act 86, Common Ground leader, Brenda McMurty, from Lamb of God Missionary Baptist Church said it best, "I am sick and tired of feeling unsafe when I drive the streets of Milwaukee! We need to give our young people the opportunity to learn safe driving practices."

Reckless driving is not simply "joyriding," as Tom Barrett, the previous Milwaukee mayor, put it. It is a serious crime. I look forward to further reforms in the next legislative session to bring awareness to this issue and to steer it away from our streets.