

## COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

### CHAIR

Public Safety Committee

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Anti-Graffiti Policy Committee  
Finance & Personnel Committee  
Steering & Rules Committee



**ROBERT G. DONOVAN**

Alderman, 8th District

## **New Information on TRUE Skool, Inc. and Graffiti**

### **Statement of Alderman Bob Donovan**

**July 22, 2010**

Since the dust-up I had earlier this week with the graffiti “mural” situation and representatives from TRUE Skool, Inc. – in my view a front organization for propagating and attempting to legitimize graffiti in Milwaukee – some new information has been provided to me that I’d like to share with citizens and the media.

- Members of a gang of graffiti vandals known as the WR Crew – busted by Milwaukee Police in late 2007 after causing more than \$50,000 in damage to homes and businesses in the city – have direct ties to TRUE Skool, sources have told me. This is quite troubling because the school’s reps and proponents keep telling everyone that they don’t hang with that kind of crowd, and that they’re all about art, etc.
- Members of the TRUE Skool crowd who were present at Monday’s mural incident kept telling me and anyone else who would listen that they “clean up graffiti” in Milwaukee. Really? This is news to the Milwaukee Police Department and city anti-graffiti officials. I don’t believe it because removing or painting over graffiti is considered sacrilege by the graffiti crowd, and also I believe it’s just more garbage being spewed out by these phony folks who – again – are doing all they can to try to legitimize graffiti in the city.
- In the two days after the TRUE Skool “block party” last weekend, 56 new graffiti tags were discovered in the blocks surrounding the party location (near S. Barclay and E. Mineral St.). The spike in tags in the area is *not* a coincidence, folks.
- Apparently unaware that Reggie Moore is vice president of the board for TRUE Skool, Mayor Barrett appointed him to the city’s Anti-Graffiti Policy Committee! I’m a longtime member and former chair of the committee, and I’m shocked by this appointment. I certainly hope this is not indicative of how the mayor will make the many hundreds of state board appointments should he become governor.

-More-

- Reggie Moore sent a derogatory email to me (and others) after Monday’s events in which he claimed TRUE Skool does not receive any public dollars. This is not true, as the organization DOES receive public money through Milwaukee County. Mr. Moore likes to talk about facts and the truth about TRUE Skool, and how critics aren’t painting a true picture of the outfit. Yet he apparently doesn’t hold himself to the same standard.
- TRUE Skool reps have repeatedly spewed nonsense about how graffiti murals and graffiti-style “art” do not lead to an increase in graffiti vandalism. This is absolute baloney! Hundreds of U.S. cities have weighed in on this subject, and the evidence is overwhelming that graffiti attracts more and more graffiti (as evidenced by the 56 new tags discovered in the area near the TRUE Skool “permission mural” at Barclay and E. Mineral). Graffiti enthusiasts love visiting murals, where they take photos, pose for photos, and on the way out (unfortunately) leave a few of their own “works” or tags.

The good people of Milwaukee have had enough of the damage caused by graffiti. The small businesses that are struggling to stay alive but yet are spending valuable resources on cleaning up graffiti week in and week out – they’ve had enough as well. The terror that graffiti causes to elderly and good, hard-working people, and entire neighborhoods is real and cannot be tolerated.

Several other cities have, quite frankly, given up on fighting graffiti. They’ve allowed the graffiti crowd to win, and I believe they look like shabby, deteriorating war zones because of it. As long as I’m alive, I won’t let Milwaukee give up, and I’ll fight with every resource available to reject, refute, abate, and eliminate graffiti as well as any efforts to legitimize it.

Lastly, TRUE Skool supporters talk about helping “at risk” young people, and teaching “leadership.” Really?

Leadership skills are learned and earned over many years, through hard work, self discipline, education, job experience, positive influences, and proper mentoring. There are no shortcuts when it comes to learning to be a leader, and I believe TRUE Skool is doing a disservice to these young people by claiming to teach leadership.

Shame on TRUE Skool, and shame on anyone who believes in or supports their effort to legitimize graffiti in Milwaukee.