

CONCERNED CLERGY COALITION OF KANSAS CITY

11200 E. 75th Terrace ~ Raytown, Missouri 64138

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www.concernedclergykc.org

July 22, 2020

TO: City Council, City of Kansas City, Missouri

SUBJECT: Opposition to Ordinance 200239

On behalf of the Concerned Clergy Coalition of Kansas City, I will respectfully express my opposition to Ordinance 200239. As a local faith based organization, we have been collaborating with AIM4Peace over the past five years in an Initiative known as the Kansas City Violence & Trauma Response Network (KCVTRN). In this capacity, we have worked diligently to identify strategies to link male survivors of violence to necessary care relative to the seven life domains which help increase the quality of life. This Initiative has sought to assist those impacted by violence and trauma identify meaningful and effective ways to move beyond very devastating experiences of violence to link them with resources and services toward education, health care, employment as well as other services.

Members of our organization and other faith leaders have partnered with AIM4Peace to respond to violent crime by going in the community to canvas; reach out to city residents; build relationships that would help to reduce further incidents of violence. We have seen this organization visible in the community; impacting violence in a truly unconventional way frequently placing their own lives at risk to help de-escalate further conflicts and tensions among community residents thereby preventing the occurrence of additional shootings and homicides. Their efforts in our city may not readily be measured. The work they do cannot easily be termed as “quantifiable” with measurable data that one can say their day to day work results in less violence in Kansas City. What we do know is that they have, over the years, gone out to network with families; gang members; those that are looking to retaliate and planning to commit violent crime – even in a hospital setting after someone has been shot – to “talk them down”; to share and convince many that there is a better way to deal with conflict. Whether it is going in the community to set up a grill and serve hot dogs; or to set up a resource table in the most dangerous or most risky parts of our city to provide gloves; caps; hot chocolate or sandals, they have been committed to making a difference in our city streets. Their partnership with other organizations that are also working to reduce or prevent violent crime has proved effective by aligning organizations like us to do a more effective work because we collaborate and work together.

I wish to expressly state that members of the Street Team; the Hospital Team; the School Outreach Workers know our city streets. Many of them have lived the lives they seek to change. Their approach makes them easier to reach those whose lives are headed in the wrong direction. Instead of seeking to defund them, we would respectfully ask this Council to continue to support their efforts and work to help identify continued strategies for this organization to thrive. Instead of voting to take away the funding and resources critical to their survival, consider how this Council can provide opportunities for other organizations to partner with AIM4Peace to build a safer community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pastor Cassandra Wainright
President

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