

Reply all   Delete  Junk  Block ...

Public Comment - Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission

SR

[Smith, Robert <robert.s.smith@marquette.edu>](mailto:robert.s.smith@marquette.edu)

Fri 4/17/2020 1:09 AM

SH County Board Health and Human Needs; Danielle Bailey <danielle.g.bailey@gmail.com>     ...

MCHRC Public Comment on ...

41 KB

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Milwaukee County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Health and Human Needs Committee,

Below and attached, please find the public comment/statement from the Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission (MCHRC) for tomorrow's vote on the Racial Equity Ordinance. I will join the meeting on behalf of the MCHRC.

Regards,

Dr. Robert Smith, Chair
Milwaukee County Human Rights Committee

MCHRC Public Comment/Statement:

The Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission believes that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors should pass this ordinance as a first step to solidifying the County's commitment to combating institutionalized racial inequities in Milwaukee County.

However, given the expertise of our commissioners and considering "...the Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission is charged with receiving reports on all matters concerning the equal rights of all persons within the county and, after due deliberations and open hearings, advising the appropriate department or division of county government of the proper procedures for preserving the equal rights of persons as guaranteed by the law..." we humbly request to be added as a "Key Stakeholder" of the ordinance and be granted one seat on the Strategic Plan Advisory Council given its responsibilities with regard to "...the implementation of solutions designed to advance Milwaukee County's vision of achieving racial equity..."

Further, we would like to point out that while we support the passage of this ordinance, it is our hope that this is truly considered a first step, and that the County acknowledges that it will take bold interventions to truly achieve equity at all levels for all of our residents. Toward that end, we implore the County to explore prioritizing direct financial investment into infrastructure and businesses in some of our most marginalized communities, improved public transportation with

The Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission believes that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors should pass this ordinance as a first step to solidifying the County's commitment to combating institutionalized racial inequities in Milwaukee County.

However, given the expertise of our commissioners and considering "...the Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission is charged with receiving reports on all matters concerning the equal rights of all persons within the county and, after due deliberations and open hearings, advising the appropriate department or division of county government of the proper procedures for preserving the equal rights of persons as guaranteed by the law..." we humbly request to be added as a "Key Stakeholder" of the ordinance and be granted one seat on the Strategic Plan Advisory Council given its responsibilities with regard to "...the implementation of solutions designed to advance Milwaukee County's vision of achieving racial equity..."

Further, we would like to point out that while we support the passage of this ordinance, it is our hope that this is truly considered a first step, and that the County acknowledges that it will take bold interventions to truly achieve equity at all levels for all of our residents. Toward that end, we implore the County to explore prioritizing direct financial investment into infrastructure and businesses in some of our most marginalized communities, improved public transportation with a focus on job accessibility, restorative justice initiatives across k-12 education institutions, and clear steps toward meaningful criminal justice reforms within the County's purview.

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the disparate impact that COVID-19 is having on black and brown communities in Milwaukee County, as we see long standing health and financial inequities being exacerbated by this pandemic. We know that it is easier for predominantly white communities, and middle to upper class communities, to shelter in place safely, than it is for some of our black and brown communities. We know that [over 70% of the deaths related to COVID 19 in Milwaukee County are black folks](#). On April 7th, we bore witness to intentional, racist voter suppression efforts that disproportionately endangered the lives of our black and brown residents. With this in mind we implore the County to pass this Racial Equity Ordinance, and that under this ordinance it prioritize directing COVID-19 relief efforts to the communities who are hardest hit by this pandemic as a result of institutionalized racism. Of critical importance, we fully expect the Racial Equity Ordinance to be marshaled in support of the [voting reforms included in this statement by a broad coalition of rights-based advocacy groups](#).

Passage of this ordinance, while crucial, is merely a first step. While symbolic of the County's commitment to achieving racial equity, it will take bold, brave, and innovative actions, as well as, direct intervention in our most marginalized communities to truly realize the goals of this ordinance. Perhaps additional ordinances will be needed, and the language of this ordinance will need to be amplified over time. As the Human Rights Commission, we look forward to partnering with County leadership on initiatives that move us closer toward our shared goal of honoring and recognizing the human rights and dignity of all of our residents, and making Milwaukee County the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission