

April 16, 2020

RE: Statement of Candidacy for Chairwoman

Dear County Board Colleagues,

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as 1st Vice-Chairwoman of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors since April 2018. Since being elected in this capacity, I have made it my duty to be a loud and strong voice on the important issues concerning Milwaukee County. Creating and supporting practical solutions to our challenges has been a priority. I have identified ways to collaborate across governments and with community members to design a County that prioritizes racial equity, sustainability, accessibility and our community's needs. Now that we have elected new Board members and lost other respected members, **I ask for your vote in support of my candidacy for Chairwoman.**

I am running for County Board Chair because I want to keep moving Milwaukee County forward towards a fresh, new vision that prioritizes the needs of our communities through the following platform:

- 1) protection of public assets
- 2) racial equity
- 3) strategic planning and collaboration
- 4) and innovative ideas that encompass our strong democratic values.

With your partnership, we will pursue these and with a proactive approach and urgency to which these items deserve.

As a product of the 53206 zip code, one of the nation's most incarcerated and impoverished areas, I consistently fought for the most vulnerable citizens in Milwaukee County. Prior to running for office, I taught at Milwaukee Public Schools. As a teacher organizer and activist, I engaged in my community, and worked with local unions and organizations to improve outcomes for MPS students, their parents, and other teachers. I volunteered for nearly 9 months as Chair of the *Vote Yes for MPS* Referendum Coalition which recently passed and secured \$87 million in funding for MPS students and staff.

Appearing on local, state-wide, and national news outlets to talk about important issues concerning our board, county and state exemplifies my willingness to advocate for our needs. I will continue to be an articulate, and trusted spokesperson for our issues and concerns.

It is a fact that we find ourselves in a crisis that could not have been predicted. The health and vitality of our community is at stake, and we need a leader with the drive and energy

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to pursue relevant solutions for supporting our constituency and meeting during a Stay Home Order which has recently been extended well into May. With our inability to meet face to face, we need someone who can conduct meetings virtually, and pursue technological solutions that will allow us to continue our important work while ensuring our communities are engaged and included.

As a member of the Board, we worked together on many important pieces of legislation, including a \$15 minimum wage ordinance, eviction reduction, anti-discrimination, naming racism a public health crisis, county parks funding, criminal justice reform, sex trafficking eradication, and funding for women of color in entrepreneurship, amongst others.

I helped create the ONE Milwaukee Taskforce to bring leaders from local government entities from the city, county, and school board level together to increase efficiency and share resources across jurisdictions.

Beyond advocating for our institutions and residents through policy, I served on many boards including but not limited to the Milwaukee Public Library System Board, Milwaukee Public Museum Board, Milwaukee Art Museum Board, Continuum of Care Board (consortium of groups fighting against homelessness), and the National Board for [Local Progress](#).

As an elected trainer with the [Progressive Governance Academy](#), I trained over 80 newly elected individuals in Seattle, New York, Colorado, Michigan and elsewhere on how to transition to public leadership, set up an office, set an agenda, learn and empower your community, power map, and understand collaborative governance. Having also connected my County Board colleagues to training, resources, networks and policies that support the vision for their own Districts, it's imperative that we also create an infrastructure that empowers each office to have the tools, resources, and support needed to succeed.

I will reduce time spent at my full-time position, scale down on trainings, and will institute regular office hours that will allow for accessibility during business hours for our flexible members, as well as evening and weekends for the many of us that still work or have young families in addition to this role. Additionally, you will be empowered to inform ways we can make our body more accessible to our working, and underserved communities that oftentimes lack the ability to fully engage in our work.

My energy and vitality will be an asset. As a three-term incumbent, I immersed myself in county policy as well as coalition and community advocacy that has given me the opportunity to be a part of solving current issues with relevant and creative solutions. Having chaired or vice-chaired multiple standing committees, you've also seen me in action as I have stepped in as Chairwoman when the Chairman needed to speak or step away via my responsibilities as 1st vice chair.

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MARCELIA NICHOLSON

MILWAUKEE COUNTY SUPERVISOR • 5TH DISTRICT

Our cultural treasures, parks, and public transportation systems are essential and together we will protect them and advocate for the Milwaukee County employees that make Milwaukee County great.

It is important that we work together. Despite our different districts, we all share a common goal. That is to make Milwaukee County a place where people can live well and thrive in. We are a diverse, and dynamic body of individuals. I will listen to your concerns and empower you to best represent your constituents through a fair referral process, robust staff training and engagement, more collaboration with the County Clerk and other departments, as well as an inclusive and participatory budget process.

We have a real opportunity to move towards a shared vision that can restore revenue and power back into the legislative branch by forging the Fair Deal and supporting legislation that works to repeal or reverse the impacts of Act 14, Act 55, and challenge any policies that seek to further disempower the role we serve in our communities. I am willing to build a bridge when we need a bridge builder, but push back against the status quo and be a fighter when we need to fight. I will stand back when someone else is the best person to lead on a particular issue. We all come from different backgrounds, and we each embody strengths and talents that I hope to empower and not suppress as Chairwoman. We are an incredible body made up of educators, doctors, mothers, business owners, organizers, community advocates, retirees, and more and it is through our collective experiences and engagement that we will best serve the County.

In closing, I once again ask for your vote for Chairwoman with the promise that I will fulfill this role to the best of my abilities. I am always available for a discussion if you have questions, and look forward to working with you on your ideas and policy priorities.

Sincerely,



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