

2
3
4 **A RESOLUTION**

5
6 honoring Women’s History Month, requesting an audit on the effects of the COVID-19
7 pandemic on the intersection of gender and racial equity in Milwaukee County, and
8 requesting the Department of Human Resources provide information on policy changes
9 needed to improve racial and gender equity for female employees

10
11
12 WHEREAS, March is Women’s History Month, an annual celebration of the
13 contributions of women to society and March 8th is annual International Women’s Day;
14 and

15
16 WHEREAS, in the United States, Women’s History Month has been officially
17 declared via Presidential Proclamation every year since 1988; and

18
19 WHEREAS, the National Women’s History Alliance announced the 2021 theme
20 of Women’s History Month as “Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to be Silenced,” an
21 extension of the 2020 theme for the centennial celebration of women’s suffrage; and

22
23 WHEREAS, women’s history, over time, has been reduced to a few key
24 individuals instead of an intensive study of how women have shaped and propelled
25 society forward; and

26
27 WHEREAS, a 2017 report titled “Where are the Women?” from the National
28 Women’s History Museum found that most K-12 curriculum standards focused on the
29 inclusion of specific topics, for example the American Revolution, the Civil Rights
30 Movement, and the Labor Rights Movement, but that there was no requirement that the
31 contributions of women during these time periods be included; and

32
33 WHEREAS, the report determined that male figures are three times more likely to
34 be featured than female figures and that states can continue to meet their curriculum
35 requirements by including the woman’s perspective, role, or contributions in to what
36 they are already mandated to teach; and

37
38 WHEREAS, gender equity plays an important role not only across the world, but
39 at Milwaukee County; and

40 WHEREAS, the audit report included in File No. 20-205 found that female
41 employees earned less than male employees in every year that was reviewed, but that
42 women were nearly half of the County's top 100 earners, although 52 percent of
43 Milwaukee County employees in 2019 were women; and

44
45 WHEREAS, the audit report also indicated that gender equity varied by
46 department with women comprising 15 percent of the transportation function and only
47 three percent of the fleet management division; and

48
49 WHEREAS, these findings are compounded when you consider the intersection
50 of race and gender as the audit report found that Black employees were the lowest
51 earning group in three out of the four years reviewed and Black women make up 70
52 percent of all Black employees; and

53
54 WHEREAS, intersectionality is the interconnectedness of social categorizations
55 such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status, which create overlapping and
56 interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; and

57
58 WHEREAS, to encourage the retention of employees and promote diversity, it is
59 in the best interests of Milwaukee County to conduct an audit on gender equity,
60 alongside the intersection of racial equity, in the workforce, including how the COVID-19
61 pandemic affects Milwaukee County's female employees; and

62
63 WHEREAS, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Milwaukee County has taken
64 steps to mitigate adverse effects on its employees through the release of several
65 Administrative Orders; and

66
67 WHEREAS, the Federal government expanded Family and Medical Leave Act
68 (FMLA) provisions to include the option to take time off to care for children, either
69 because of illness or child care and school closures; and

70
71 WHEREAS, the expanded FMLA provision was not extended in to 2021 and,
72 because it is a Federal program, Milwaukee County does not have the ability to change
73 FMLA usage for its employees; and

74
75 WHEREAS, Administrative Order 21-1 Expanded Pay Sick Leave was approved
76 through File No. 21-197, which provides employees with an additional 80 hours of sick
77 leave if they are unable to work or unable to telework due to symptoms of, exposure to,
78 or confirmed cases of COVID-19; and

79 WHEREAS, the Expanded Pay Sick Leave Order does not allow employees to
80 take time off to care for a dependent with COVID-19 or because of child care or school
81 closures and no additional measures have been enacted to do so; and
82

83 WHEREAS, women are often responsible for caring for children, whether they
84 are sick, need to go to a medical appointment, or encounter child care issues, requiring
85 that they use other leave banks; and
86

87 WHEREAS, if workplaces do not allow flexibility for its female employees with
88 children, they are faced with the possibility that they may need to quit in order to provide
89 child care or assist with virtual schooling; and
90

91 WHEREAS, Reuters found that 2.5 million women have exited the workforce
92 during the pandemic, compared to 1.8 million men; and
93

94 WHEREAS, the New York Times reported that 32 percent of women who have
95 left the workforce during the pandemic identified child care as the reason; and
96

97 WHEREAS, leaving the workforce early, even if temporary, has long-term
98 implications for women, including difficulty re-entering, missing out on potential raises,
99 which men are receiving instead, and losing vital contributions to retirement accounts;
100 and
101

102 WHEREAS, a study cited by CNBC found that about a third of respondents took
103 a cut pay in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but that only 44 percent of women
104 eventually had their pay restored, compared to 52 percent of men and it also found that
105 58 percent of men received a raise in 2020, compared to 48 percent of women; and
106

107 WHEREAS, beyond the workplace, women are frequently tasked with “invisible
108 work” in their homes, communities, and private lives and these contributions, because
109 they are unpaid and women are seen as being “naturally” suited for them, are often
110 devalued, according to Arlene Kaplan Daniels seminal article in *Social Problems*; and
111

112 WHEREAS, as a result, women are obligated to juggle myriad responsibilities
113 that men traditionally do not, leading to their exit from the workforce because many
114 workplaces do not have policies and procedures in place to accommodate these
115 differences; and
116

117 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Department of Human Resources has
118 committed to addressing racial and gender equity in its hiring and employment practices
119 and evaluating our policies is a continuous process; and

120
121
122
123
124
125
126
127
128
129
130
131
132
133
134
135
136
137
138
139
140
141
142
143
144
145
146
147
148
149
150
151
152
153
154
155
156
157
158

WHEREAS, the Committee on Audit, at its meeting of March 17, 2021, recommended adoption of File No. 21-329 (vote 5-0); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that Milwaukee County honors March as Women’s History Month and the contributions that women make, not only to society as a whole, but in Milwaukee County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby requests that the Audit Services Division in the Office of the Comptroller perform an audit on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Milwaukee County’s workforce and the impact of the Administrative Orders released throughout 2020 and 2021 on employees, with an emphasis on understanding the impact to female employees and the intersection of race and gender on equity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby requests that the audit explore areas such as:

- the impact of Administrative Orders related to teleworking (20-3) and Expanded Pay Sick Leave (21-1), including the effect that the Orders have on providing childcare
- separation rates of County employees since March 2020
- hiring data during the pandemic

; and

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Human Resources shall provide a report analyzing policy changes that could be implemented to improve racial and gender equity in Milwaukee County’s hiring and employment practices, including the continued ability for teleworking, standardized sick leave policies, and the mutual benefit of providing flexibility to the employee and employer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Milwaukee County is committed to improving the workplace for all employees and the continued improvement of its policies and procedures to improve employee satisfaction and retention.