October 26, 2021

The Honorable,

County Executive David Crowley

Milwaukee County Courthouse, Room 306  
901 N. 9th Street

Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Mr. Crowley,

Your decision to re-name the Office of African-American Affairs as the Office of Equity is by any measure a terrible mistake.  It is a transparently political choice that seems to have been made by someone deaf to the human realities that made the creation of the Office of African-American Affairs necessary.

I know why this office exists.  I worked for years to see it created.  I lived the racism, segregation, crime, and poverty that afflicts our community long enough to know that the needs of our people are unique and in need of particular attention.

I watched county executives who served before you promise progress and offer half measures. Despairing of Milwaukee County’s help, I fought with Mayor Barrett and his administration to give this office life.  I watched the idea being tossed around like a dirty rag while our people continued to struggle.

And now, after these many years, with a strong director in place and an actual roadmap for the future in mind, what do you do?

Did I miss the news today announcing that African-American unemployment was no longer the worst in our state?  Did I miss the report praising the educational and economic opportunities now offered African-Americans?  Did I miss the national study telling everyone how African-Americans were now becoming homeowners and building stores of value for their children?

Or did I instead read that Wisconsin continues to incarcerate African-Americans at a higher rate than any other state in America – one in 36?  Yes, that’s what I read, two days ago.

To whom does any of this make sense?  Do you believe it?  Could you articulate your reasons for it while Chris Abele is drinking a glass of water?  I wonder.  Many of us wonder.

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For the sake of all you claim to serve, I sincerely ask you to reconsider.  And if you really want to change Milwaukee County for the better, I suggest you leave the Office of African-American Affairs alone and work instead to restore the proper authority of the County Board stripped away by the absurdities of Act 14.

Sincerely,



Khalif J. Rainey,

Alderman, 7th District