



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

December 6, 2021

The Honorable, Members of the Common Council of
The City of Milwaukee
City Hall Room 205

Honorable Council Members:

I am vetoing Common Council File Number 211137, which establishes new Aldermanic district boundaries. Based on the 2020 Census totals and other population data, the maps adopted by the Common Council do not adequately reflect the growth of Hispanic residents.

I want to be clear that my veto is not a repudiation of the overall redistricting work done by the Common Council. I appreciate the hard work of Alderman Hamilton, the Legislative Reference Bureau and the City Clerk, who conducted this process efficiently and admirably in very short order.

Based on the 2020 Census data, Milwaukee's Hispanic population is just over 20%, or one fifth of the city's population. It would follow that the City's legislative body is on a path to have one fifth of members from plurality Hispanic districts if current trends hold. The growth of Hispanic voting age residents in the existing 13th District reflects that trend, growing from 21.9% in 2012 to 27.1% in 2020.

In the Council's adopted district maps, however, two wards were shifted between the 13th and 14th Districts. That change actually reduces the Hispanic voting age population in District 13 between the 2012 maps and the 2020 maps. I am concerned about the ramifications of these changes for adequate representation and meeting the goals of the Voting Rights Act to our greatest ability.

I recognize and respect that the ultimate decision on district maps and composition belongs to the Common Council. Since the adoption of the original maps on November 23, numerous proposals have come forward to address this issue of Hispanic representation. I urge the Council to consider these and any other proposals that better reflect Hispanic population growth and assure appropriate representation.

While the timing of the redistricting process was not in the City's control, there is still time to make important changes to these maps that ensure adequate potential representation. Based on my conversations with the City Attorney, I am confident that Council adoption of revised maps by January 18 is adequate and will not pose challenges to other jurisdictions, nor interfere with elections.

Milwaukee's diversity is an undeniable strength, and racial diversity is a critical ingredient in our continued growth and success as a city. Increasing diversity locally and nationally is a great sign for our democracy and the nation as a whole. It is only fair that growing populations be afforded political representation proportionate to their size and shared stake in the community.

For the reasons outlined above, I ask that you sustain my veto and consider revising the adopted district boundaries to provide the best representation possible for city residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tom Barrett
Mayor