

## **Open Letter to the Member of the Milwaukee Common Council**

January 14, 2022

To the Members of the Common Council:

You are no doubt familiar with the efforts we, a coalition of concerned Milwaukee Latinos and allies, have made thus far to forestall the implementation of new and problematic configurations of Milwaukee's aldermanic districts, specifically those that house the majority of our city's Latino population. We have acted in good faith, attempting to put forth reasonable alternatives that create minimal impact on historic aldermanic boundaries while recognizing and accommodating the demographic shifts that demand more equitable representation of Latino residents and voters.

Rather than our efforts being embraced by the City of Milwaukee as a means forward to a more just resolution of these issues, the Office of the City Attorney has applied what we feel to be a deeply flawed opinion regarding the constitutionality of the proposed alternative redistricting maps that have been submitted for consideration. Based on the assessments of expert counsel that we have secured, the City Attorney's office is steering this Council in a direction that is not only ungrounded, it is exposing the city to a position that could trigger action up to and including litigation. And it must be noted that while our proposals thus far have attempted to moderate considerations for all parties concerned, should the City choose to proceed with such a polarizing and lopsided decision we will be left with no recourse but to follow suit with a plan that, while fully within our rights in light the contiguous growth of the Latino Population and the Voting Rights Act, will by necessity be far less conciliatory.

We trust that common sense and fairness will prevail and call upon you to once more come to the table in a posture more conducive to arriving at a redistricting solution that truly respects the rights of our Latino population while recognizing our cooperative presence in the legacy communities we share. It is our opinion that a step in this direction would include the Common Council immediately retaining disinterested, nationally-recognized, outside counsel better equipped to interpret the Voting Rights Act and the applicable state and municipal laws that govern this issue to advise this Council from a position of informed expertise in this matter.

Achieving equal representation and being able to cast equal and effective votes depends on redistricting maps that are drawn fairly to reflect and respect our communities. The maps that we pass today will determine the allocation of political influence and representation in our city for at least the next ten years. The redistricting process, at its heart, is all about ensuring that everyday citizens, especially those most vulnerable to disenfranchisement or underrepresentation, are guaranteed an equitable voice. That is why we, the undersigned, are gravely concerned about the most recent turn of events and strongly urge you to take swift action towards fostering greater transparency and securing the expertise necessary for a just and lawful outcome. We believe that the requests outlined in this letter are necessary to achieve that objective.

Sincerely,

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