



January 14, 2013

Ald. Terry Witkowski, Chair
Public Safety Committee
Common Council
City Hall, Room 205
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Ald. Willie Hines
President
Common Council
City Hall, Room 205
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

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of Wisconsin
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Via facsimile (414) 286-3456

Dear President Hines and Alderman Witkowski,

It appears that Mayor Barrett will appoint up to two candidates to fill existing vacancies on the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners in the near future. It is our understanding that the Public Safety Committee will be asked to review the candidates' qualifications and make a recommendation to the full Common Council, which must approve the appointments. Your leadership will be critical in the confirmation process.

We urge you and your colleagues to exercise the authority you have to make sure that whoever the candidates may be, that they are capable of carrying out or overseeing the several functions given to the Board and Commission by state statute and city ordinance.

We urge the Public Safety Committee to hold at least two public hearings in venues that are accessible to the public in order to take testimony from Milwaukee residents regarding the role of the Commission and the Board, expectations of Board members, and the Milwaukee Fire and Police Departments prior to the committee voting on nominees.

It has been nearly a year since it was revealed that unauthorized strip searches and illegal body cavity searches had been carried out by police officers assigned to District 5 for at least two years. Since then there has been great concern about other possible instances of excessive use of force and discriminatory harassment. Many community leaders and groups have called for the United States Department of Justice to conduct a "pattern and practice" investigation into civil rights violations by members of the Milwaukee Police Department. The MPD and FPC have taken important steps to respond to some of these concerns. For instance, the Board recently made significant changes to the MPD's Standard Operating Procedure 460 – Use of Force.

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Despite some movement, however, this is not the time to rubber stamp the Mayor's appointment. In order to advance the missions of the public safety departments and the Commission, we believe it is necessary to assure the public that the Board will be capable of moving forward and given our recent history will listen to the public.

The Fire and Police Commission has a number of important issues and questions to address in 2013:

- These should include evaluating progress (or lack thereof) in implementing those recommendations of the PARC study that city leaders approved, and whether any other previous recommendations shouldn't be reconsidered.
- What else needs to be done to address issues of police misconduct and discriminatory harassment?
- Should the Commission have additional staff to carry out audits of MPD systems and policies and report directly to the Board and Common Council?
- What needs to be done now to make sure that the diversity of members of both the Fire and Police departments reflect our community to the greatest extent possible?
- Does the MPD's practice of making 240,000 traffic and pedestrian stops a year, with or without cause, comport with community orienting policing best practices?

Given the seriousness and complexity of these issues, you and your colleagues must not only devote consideration time to interviewing the candidates, but the public must be involved in a transparent process. **Please notify us when you have scheduled public hearings at which the public will be allowed to testify.**

Thank you for your cooperation on behalf of the undersigned community leaders and organizational representatives:

Chris Ahmuty ACLU of Wisconsin

James H. Hall Jr. NAACP Milwaukee Branch

Willie S. Bisco MICAH

To reiterate:

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Art Heitzer

Nat'l. Lawyers Guild - Milw.

Janet Callie

ARACOPA Coalition
for Social Justice

George Mauer

Peace Action Wisconsin

Paula N. Penabaker

YWCA Southeast Wisconsin

Sh. Dell

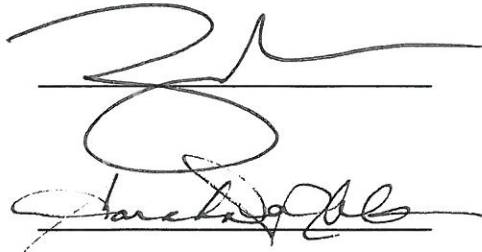
TRUE SKOOL, INC.

Sharlen Moore

Urban Underground

To reiterate:

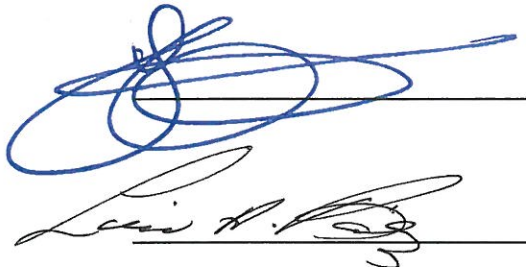
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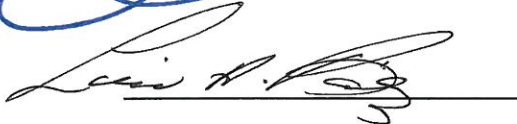
Center for Youth Engagement



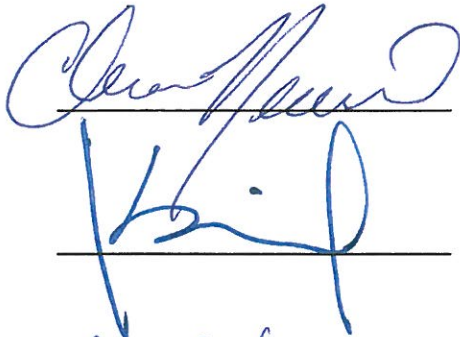
Reproductive Justice Collective



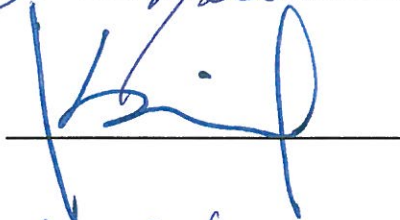
Community Supporter



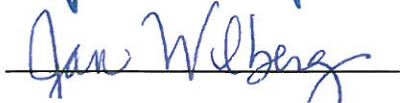
Centro Hispano Milwaukee



Voces de la Frontera



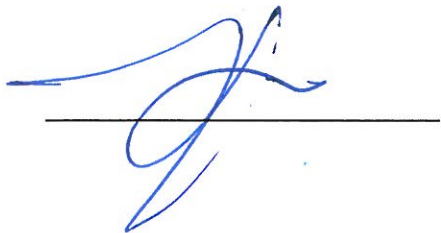
Milwaukee Matters, Inc.



Wilberg Community Planning LLC

Imshuk Jaland

Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition



Justice and Race Gap