



It is often easier to become outraged by injustice half a world away than by oppression and discrimination half a block from home.

January 24, 2013

President Willie L Hines
Common Council, City of Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Regarding: Appointment of Ann Wilson as Commissioner (Fire and Police Commission)

Dear Pres. Hines:

The appointment of Ann Wilson as a Commissioner to the Fire and Police Commission at this time is a very poor choice by the Mayor for a variety of reasons. To narrow the focus, we do not support this appointment because we question the system of appointment and question Wilson's ability to carry out these duties.

Mayor Thomas Barrett has submitted a written acknowledgement that he selected a smaller group of local individuals/organizations to pre-approve the appointment of Ms. Wilson. A more community-responsive process would have included the Milwaukee Commission on Police Community Relations (MCPCR) in this early review. As a collective of community organizations who meet monthly the MCPCR's overarching responsibility is police and community relations. The MCPCR also serves as a 'quasi-shield' for organizations who wish to have frank discussion of police-related matters in that its final decisions do not rest solely on the shoulders of the individual organizations. In Milwaukee, we have a limited number of organizations with effective programming in our communities. In the recent past, some of the organizations have had to choose between speaking out against injustices and protecting the funding for their respective programs; the organizations that continued in these discussions against practice by the Mayor or the Common Council were omitted in the next regular funding cycle. While funding is a separate problem within *City business*, it is the reality that we live with during the appointment of Wilson.

Wilson is currently employed by the City of Milwaukee—specifically by the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee. There is no indication that she is resigning her position as Director of Hillside Resource Center. City Attorney Langley has submitted into record a statement to indicate why Wilson's appointment is not a 'legal' conflict of interest. The Fire and Police Commission does not make its decisions independent of the Mayor, Council, and Attorney Langley. It would not be uncommon for Wilson's employment with the HACM to be jeopardized when she chooses not to serve as a 'rubber stamp' for either of these offices.

Wilson's position as Director of the Hillside Resource Center is truly a full-time responsibility as the facility is multi-faceted with a variety of full-time components. The community has called for full implementation of the 2006 PARC Report recommendations in addition to specific requests from the community. These implementations will certainly increase the time commitments and involvement of the Commissioners. No human can be in two places at the same time; Wilson's responsiveness will be challenged in one or both of her responsibilities.

Mayor Barrett's appointment of Ann Wilson at this time is more of a distraction than the support of the community. In a community with the volume of talent that Milwaukee has, we are extremely uncomfortable that the Mayor has chosen to limit the appointment to an individual who is within the City's employ. We ask the Common Council to carefully consider the residents' recommendations regarding the appointment.

Respectfully submitted,
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