City of Milwaukee

Equity Impact Statement

1. Describe the proposed ordinance or resolution. File number: _____

This provision in s. 62.50(ih) of 2023 Wisconsin Act 12 removes the Fire and Police Commission's power to prescribe policy to the police and fire departments, and gives the chief of each department the ability to establish the policies for their respective departments. While the Council is still able to remove and modify such changes, they will now require a 2/3rd vote to do so.

2. Identify the anticipated equity impacts, if any, of this proposal.

While the Mayor and Common Council still possess oversight functions over the departments, both the fire and police departments will be able to operate in a more autonomous fashion.
The policies favored by the department do not always align with those favored by the civilian-lead commission or the city as a whole. The police department has recently clashed with activists from minority communities, for instance over its push to suspend SOP 575, requiring expedient disclosure of body cam footage, during the 2024 RNC convention. It is likely that this transfer of powers results in policy that more closely aligns with the department's policy objectives. Even in the absence of any policy changes, the provision will likely exacerbate perceptions that the police department is unaccountable to civilian oversight.

3. Identify which minority groups, if any, may be negatively or positively impacted by the proposal.

African Americans, Hispanics, and other groups that have historically seen outsized impacts from ineffective or harmful public safety policies may be negatively impacted by this provision - although the net impacts will be determined by the actual policy changes the Police Chief and Fire Chief implement. Even without policy changes, the provision may weaken the relationship between the departments and minority communities - which will further negatively impact those communities. A lack of trust in law enforcement presumably contributes to lower crime clearance rates (and thus higher instances of crime), and a greater potential for dangerous encounters between community members and police officers.

Milwaukee City Hall • Room 205 • 200 East Wells Street • Milwaukee, WI 53202

4. Describe any engagement efforts with minority communities potentially impacted by the proposal.

This is a new, state-mandated effort, not a City-led proposal, therefore there has been no organized engagement of minority communities to date.

5. Describe how any anticipated equity impacts of the proposal will be documented or evaluated.

The immediate effects of this provision can be evaluated by monitoring any policy changes implemented by the Police and Fire Chiefs after its effective date. Secondary effects brought about by such changes might best be monitored by conducting individual policy reviews of those changes, if the policies are likely to have a negative equity impacts.

6. Describe strategies that will be used, if any, to mitigate any anticipated equity impacts.

The Council can monitor policy changes implemented by the Police and Fire Chiefs as a result of this provision, and remove any policies they deem likely to have a net-negative impact on equity in the city.

Name: **Gunnar Raasch, Legislative Fiscal Analyst - Lead**

Signature:

Date: **6/22/2023**