



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202 • [www.city.milwaukee.gov](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 18, 2020

## **Study shows Wisconsin ranking last in racial equality in jobs, wealth**

**Statement of Alderman Khalif J. Rainey, Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Alderwoman Nikiya Dodd, Alderman Ashanti Hamilton, Alderwoman Chantia Lewis and Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II**

For years we have known that Milwaukee ranks among the very worst places for African Americans to live when it comes to segregation, employment and economic inequality, health disparities and education. Now we are learning that Wisconsin ranks as THE worst state for racial equality in employment and wealth, thanks to a new study.

The recent WalletHub study compared 50 states and the District of Columbia across eight key metrics, to look at the difference between white and black Americans in areas such as annual income, unemployment rate and homeownership rate. Wisconsin placed 50th for the lowest racial equality, just above the District of Columbia, in last place. Other Midwestern states ranked just above the Badger state in racial inequality in their economy: Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan and above them Ohio.

On the flip side, New Mexico is ranked as the state with the highest racial equality in its economy, followed by Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii and Texas.

According to WalletHub, the average white family has a net worth of \$171,000, compared to just \$17,150 for the average African-American family in the U.S.! And it found that 3.2 percent of executive or senior-level positions are held by Black Americans, even though the demographic makes up 13 percent of the nation's population.

Before we can truly seek to meaningfully address injustices that affect the daily lives of black and brown people across Milwaukee, Wisconsin and our nation, we must first tackle core economic issues that are destroying the hope for a better life for untold thousands of minority residents. Oppression by economic discrimination and income inequality is still oppression, and is especially cruel and unjust.

-More-

A good first step in Milwaukee would be for Mayor Barrett to pledge full funding for the Office of African-American Affairs in the city's 2021 budget. We, along with a majority of Common Council members, have expressly asked the Mayor to fully fund the OAAA in the 2021 budget, and we sincerely hope he follows through on that.

The OAAA would be able to better serve the community with resources and support that can help families and those looking to start a business or better themselves economically, health-wise, and in many other vital areas. A fully-funded OAAA would show Milwaukee that we are truly working to push the needle in a positive direction toward economic equality.

If we don't act to make improvements to better the lives of black and brown people now, then we are failing to capitalize on a pivotal moment.

We can and must do better, and that change must happen now.