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Ald. Tony Zielinski
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Sweat-Free Ordinance Helps Save American Jobs

*Using The Purchasing Power Of Government To Make A
Difference*

Ald. Tony Zielinski (District 14) has co-sponsored an ordinance that regulates the contracting of “responsible manufacturers” for goods and services used by the city. The ordinance was passed by the Common Council today and takes effect 60 days from now.

The legislation accomplishes two things. First, according to Ald. Zielinski, “it creates a level playing field for economic development. It encourages buying American made goods instead of goods made with cheap labor overseas.” Second, the ordinance prevents the economic exploitation of workers.

One key shift in this ordinance from previous legislation already in place is the way “non-poverty level” wages are determined. Many organizations assert that the formula used to calculate wages in countries outside the United States does not accurately reflect what is necessary for non-poverty wages in those countries. This ordinance will define wages based on the Central Intelligence Agency’s fact book, which adjusts for purchasing power parity.

“I am sharing this legislation with other major cities hoping they will follow our lead. The combined purchasing power of multiple municipalities can have a real and lasting effect on the working and economic conditions of laborers around the world,” Ald. Zielinski said, adding that the goal of the ordinance is to continue to cultivate Milwaukee as a responsible global citizen. He said, “If large purchasing entities like municipalities make their money talk in these ways, we can have a very serious impact on human rights abuses and sweatshop labor.”

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