

Judge Maxine Aldridge White
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January 8, 2021

City of Milwaukee Common Council
City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Room 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Honorable Members of the City of Milwaukee Common Council,

I am writing to strongly urge your confirmation of Makda Fessahaye to serve as the Department of Employee Relations Director for the City of Milwaukee. Makda has a strong work ethic, leads with integrity, is a change agent and is passionate about public service, especially in Milwaukee. Her personal attributes – an appropriate temperament, breadth of knowledge, fair-mindedness and commitment to excellence - make her a superb choice to lead the Department of Employee Relations.

Makda is the daughter of East African immigrants, born in Washington, D.C., and has called Milwaukee home since the age of five. She has an undergraduate degree from Northwestern University and a law degree from Marquette University.

I have known Makda for over nine years, including her time at Marquette University Law School and during her leadership of the Wisconsin Association of African-American Lawyers, where she worked to promote diversity in Wisconsin's legal community. As Administrator for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections' Division of Adult Institutions, Makda was responsible for the day to day operations of the division, its thirty-six correctional facilities, six offices and bureaus, overseeing over 7,200 employees while caring for over 20,000 individuals in custody. She also served as legal counsel for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, handling subject matters including employment law, open government law and privacy law.

Throughout her career Makda has demonstrated an appreciation for the critical role that leadership can play in setting a tone of fairness, empathy and investment in the success of others. She has used her collaborative skills bringing a variety of organizations together to provide financial support and employment opportunities to a diverse group of professionals in Milwaukee.

I believe that Makda is a visionary, working tirelessly to promote Milwaukee as a place where one can thrive. She has been a key player in the implementation of pipeline programs, creating paths for youth to achieve their dreams and career aspirations while serving the public. I am confident that Makda's confirmation would serve as another beacon of hope for those who are considering making Milwaukee their home.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Judge Maxine Aldridge White
Wisconsin Court of Appeals, District 1