



August 31, 2018
City of Milwaukee Common Council
200 East Wells St
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear President Hamilton and Members of the Milwaukee Common Council,

Milwaukee has a national reputation as the worst city to raise a black child. Generations of deep inequities in power and resource allocation in our city have created segregated health outcomes. Leaders Igniting Transformation (LIT) is a Milwaukee-based non-profit led by youth of color committed to an unapologetic vision of 1) liberation and anti-oppression teaching, and 2) public policy innovations that improve the lives of and are controlled by young people.

LIT intentionally builds youth power through Black Hogwarts (our summer training program), our Campus Leadership Project (with chapters on each Milwaukee's campus), and a Youth Power Agenda of public policy campaigns that support the leadership of Milwaukee young to advocate for concrete improvements in their neighborhoods and lives, including:

1. **Closing the School to Prison Pipeline:** Ending inequities in school discipline, seclusion, and restraint that disproportionately fill our prisons with our city's future leaders of color.
2. **Broke AF:** Creating an economy where young people of color profit from labor, are guaranteed affordable education, and flourish unburdened from systemic financial hardships.
3. **Democracy Done Right:** Designing a Milwaukee where where young people feel safe in their neighborhoods, participate fully in voting and governance, and gain agency and power over decisions that affect them including running for elected office.
4. **True Sanctuary:** Ensuring that Milwaukee protects all families regardless of their immigration status so young people of color feel safe and fulfill their dreams.

We believe the current Health Commissioner vacancy represents an opportunity for the Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) to fully embrace a health equity vision and become a force for advancing justice for the health of Milwaukee's next generation. Recent mismanagement of MHD on child lead poisoning, vaccination, and STI prevention and testing has hurt youth of color the most. These aren't accidents, but symptoms of systemically stripping our youth of power and our leaders of accountability for their health and well being. We are calling on you to urgently appoint a Health Commissioner with a bold health equity vision and commitment to transformative solutions like our Youth Power Agenda.

Dr. Jeanette Kowalik went to Sherman Elementary and struggled with some of the same barriers to health that Milwaukee's youth of color still experience including poverty, housing instability, teenage pregnancy, violence, and biased media coverage. We believe she also represents the leadership possible when we begin to support and graduate a generation of black PhDs. Please confirm Dr. Jeanette Kowalik as Milwaukee Health Commissioner on September 5, 2018 and hold her accountable to help make Milwaukee's future young, black, brown, and LIT!

Sincerely,

Board of Directors, **Leaders Igniting Transformation (LIT)**
2821 Vel R. Phillips Ave, Suite #200, Milwaukee, WI 53212

Darrol Gibson, *Co-Chair*

Shavonda Sisson, *Co-Chair*

Dr. Monique Liston

Selma Aly

Amanda Avalos

Bridget Robinson

Brit Nicole

Kyle Pfister

Amanda Merkwae