



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Milwaukee County

DAVID CROWLEY • MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

January 26, 2021

Alderman Robert Bauman
Chair, Public Works Committee
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Chair Bauman and Honorable Members of the Public Works Committee:

I write today in support of the proposal contained in File #201318, renaming Old World Third Street from West McKinley Avenue to West Wisconsin Avenue as Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. This legislation corrects a wrong that has existed for many years; however, as the Reverend Doctor King said, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but bends toward justice.” This long overdue action, though seemingly small, helps us bend that arc toward justice.

The debate over renaming this street has gone on for many years, often contentiously. During the initial renaming of what used to be Third Street, some businesses residing on that street were reticent to embrace Dr. King’s name. Having an address on Doctor Martin Luther King Jr., Drive should not be a source of reticence – it should be a source of pride. It sends a signal that Milwaukee – no stranger to racial segregation and tension – is open and welcoming to all who wish to live, work, or start a business here. There are few individuals who better represent this ideal than the man who asked to be judged “not by the color of my skin, but by the content of my character.”

As all members of the Common Council support this legislation, I am hopeful that Dr. King’s name will finally adorn the entirety of Third Street in Downtown Milwaukee. We owe it to this great man, as well as the residents of Milwaukee who look to us as a beacon of equity and inclusivity, to put aside the petty squabbles that have waylaid this legislation in the past and move forward in the pursuit of justice and racial equity.

Respectfully,

David C. Crowley
County Executive
Milwaukee County

cc: Members of the Public Works Committee