



Cavalier Johnson
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

September 8, 2023

Members of Milwaukee's Common Council,

I hereby return Common Council File # 230358 unsigned.

As a recent legal opinion has made clear, the mayoral administration of the City of Milwaukee, not the city's legislative branch, shall direct the municipality's lobbying efforts.

I fully respect the process that has annually produced the city's legislative package. It is a process that provides essential direction to the Intergovernmental Relations Division of the Department of Administration (IRD). I further welcome the participation of Common Council members and City Clerk staff in support of the legislative package. For many years this has been a successful process, and I anticipate it will continue to be successful.

The obvious impetus for File # 230358 is frustration with certain provisions of Act 12. While the work of IRD successfully achieved our top legislative goal, I concur that objectionable and invidious provisions were attached to that legislation. But to think that if the Legislative Affairs Divisions had existed at the time of key negotiations it would have changed the outcome is simply unreasonable. I was, and remain, incredibly proud of the efforts of the IRD team for their generationally successful efforts.

No piece of state or federal legislation in recent history has had more direct involvement from a member of the Common Council. In fact, President Perez was an active member of our discussions, physically joining us in Madison on numerous occasions as well as testifying at state Assembly and Senate committee hearings, and played a critical role in the negotiations process. To rewrite history and suggest the Common Council was excluded from the process is demonstrably incorrect.

I will also point out that, for a six-month, crucial period in the discussions over Act 12, the Common Council failed to fill its own lobbying position, a self-inflicted staffing decision that restricted the established flow of information to Council members.

Wis. Stats. Sec. 62.51(1)(a) makes it clear the Mayor appoints the position of director of the Intergovernmental Relations Division. It is absurd to imagine that a municipal ordinance could supersede the obvious intent of state law that the IRD director has primacy over the lobbying efforts of the city. Consistent with the aforementioned legal opinion, the IRD director will continue to be responsible for directing lobbying efforts in the City of Milwaukee.

Ultimately, I welcome the additional resources identified in this ordinance because a more informed Common Council results in a better government. I affirm the administration will continue to cooperate with the Council's lobbyist(s), including the new Legislative Affairs Division, consistent with the legal opinion addressing this matter. Nevertheless, I return File # 230358 unsigned.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cavalier Johnson', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Cavalier Johnson
Mayor