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KHALIF J. RAINEY
ALDERMAN, 7TH DISTRICT



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March 25, 2021

The Honorable,
Board Members of the Fire and Police Commission
City Hall

Honorable Members:

I regret that I am unable to appear before you today to speak to the Common Council File Number 200823 which urges you to disallow canines as a use of force. I did, however, want to take a moment to urge your serious consideration of this proposal and to provide the context that led to my decision to sponsor it.

I doubt I need to tell any of you about the history of trauma inflicted on people of color by police officers using dogs as weapons. These are fine, well-trained animals that have a dark history of being misused by some of those sworn to protect the public. To us they do not represent comfort or a place of safety. On the contrary, they have come to symbolize violence in the service of oppression.

Representatives of the Milwaukee Police Department have said that they no longer use canine officers in this way. If this is so, given the history of misuse I refer to above, it seems only appropriate to make it a matter of record; to put proof to paper that the department is doing everything that it can to leave these practices in the past. Of greater concern, though, are incidents like that reported as recently as March 8 in *The New York Times*, in which a Michigan state trooper was recorded setting his canine companion on a suspect and allowing the dog to attack the seemingly defenseless man for four minutes. By all appearances, this was a truly vicious and wicked act. The Milwaukee Police Department must set its face against use of force like this and must make clear to its officers that it is never acceptable.

Thank you for your work and for your consideration of this matter. Should you have questions of me, please do not hesitate to contact my office. I would respectfully request that this letter be read into the record.

Sincerely,

Khalif J. Rainey,
Alderman, 7th District

cc: Mr. Leon Todd, Executive Director