



Legislation Text

File #: 180127, **Version:** 1

180127
SUBSTITUTE 1

ALD. COGGS, BAUMAN, HAMILTON, KOVAC, JOHNSON, RAINEY, STAMPER, LEWIS, PEREZ, MURPHY, DONOVAN, BORKOWSKI, WITKOWSKI, BOHL AND ZIELINSKI

A substitute ordinance renaming North 4th Street from West St. Paul Avenue to West Capitol Drive Vel R. Phillips Avenue.

This ordinance renames 4th Street from West St. Paul Avenue to West Capitol Drive Vel R. Phillips Avenue.

Whereas, Vel R. Phillips was a spirited and distinguished political leader and fighter who served the community with unparalleled distinction and excellence; and

Whereas, Vel R. Phillips was born on February 18, 1924 on the South Side of Milwaukee, attended Howard University for her undergraduate degree and then went to the University of Wisconsin Law School, from which she was the first African-American woman to graduate; and

Whereas, In 1956, Vel R. Phillips became the first woman and the first African-American to be elected as a member of the Milwaukee Common Council, on which she served until 1971, and was an advocate for the African-American community and women, and instrumental in outlawing housing discrimination; and

Whereas, Continuing throughout her career to exhibit a fearless, pioneering spirit, Vel R. Phillips was also appointed a judge in Milwaukee County Children's Court in 1971, becoming the first female judge in Milwaukee and the first African-American judge in Wisconsin, and was elected as Wisconsin's first non-white Secretary of State in 1978; and

Whereas, Vel R. Phillips was always a leader in the African-American community and an advocate for women throughout Wisconsin, playing an active role in the NAACP and the civil rights movement, and was also the highest-ranking woman to win a state office in Wisconsin in the 20th century and the first African-American to be elected as a member of a political party's national committee when she was elected to the Democratic National Committee; and

Whereas, Through her foundation, Vel R. Phillips continued her work to better her community, with a mission "to serve as an economic hand of justice that seeks to eliminate invisible barriers between disadvantaged people and their goals, clearing the path for educational, occupational, social and political parity"; and

Whereas, By changing the name of 4th Street from West St. Paul Avenue, to West Capitol Drive to Vel R. Phillips Avenue, the City can recognize Vel R. Phillips' historic contributions to Milwaukee; and

Whereas, The significance of 4th Street to Vel R. Phillips includes the following:

1. She attended elementary school on 4th Street at the former Garfield Avenue Elementary School.
2. Her family attended and she was married at St. Mark A.M.E. Church while it was on 4th Street.
3. 4th Street was part of the 6th Aldermanic District she represented.
4. 4th Street runs parallel to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, symbolic of her connection and collaboration with Dr. King during the Civil Rights Movement.

now, therefore

The Mayor and Common Council of the City of Milwaukee do ordain as follows:

Part 1. North 4th Street from West St. Paul Avenue to West Capitol Drive is renamed Vel R. Phillips Avenue.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

Legislative Reference Bureau

Date: _____

IT IS OUR OPINION THAT THE ORDINANCE
IS LEGAL AND ENFORCEABLE

Office of the City Attorney

Date: _____

LRB171200-1
Teodros W. Medhin
4/23/2018