



Legislation Text

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200305 SUBSTITUTE 1

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Substitute resolution urging the Fire and Police Commission to redouble recruitment efforts within Milwaukee neighborhoods so that the Fire and Police Departments are more diverse and reflective of the communities that they serve.

This resolution urges the Fire and Police Commission to redouble recruitment efforts within Milwaukee neighborhoods so that the Fire and Police Departments are more diverse and reflective of the communities that they serve.

Whereas, The officer-involved death of George Floyd in Minneapolis has given rise to protests and demonstrations in Milwaukee and nationwide to urge for police reform and changes in the treatment of people of color by public safety agencies; and

Whereas, These recent demonstrations give voice to long-standing tensions between people of color and public safety agencies, particularly law enforcement, in Milwaukee; and

Whereas, One facet of the tensions between public safety agencies and the communities served by these agencies is whether the membership of public safety agencies are representative of the communities served; and

Whereas, For 75 years, City employees, including sworn members of the Police and Fire Departments, were required to reside within the City of Milwaukee; and

Whereas, Police officers, firefighters and other members of the Police and Fire Departments serve as anchors of the neighborhoods they live in; and

Whereas, The Wisconsin Legislature ended the residency rule in 2013, leading to an exodus of City employees, particularly public safety employees, moving out of Milwaukee, and opening the applicant pool for public safety positions to individuals who do not live or want to live in Milwaukee; and

Whereas, The number of sworn Police and Fire Department employees living outside of Milwaukee has steadily increased, from none in 2013, to 211 in 2014, 496 in 2016, 933 in 2018, and 1,249 in 2020; and

Whereas, Currently 50% of the sworn members of the Police Department reside outside of Milwaukee, as do 48% of the sworn (non-represented) members of the Fire Department; and

Whereas, While Milwaukee is home to a diverse population, in which about 65% of residents are people of color, Milwaukee County as a whole is comprised of only 49% people of color, while

Wisconsin is far less diverse, with only 19% people of color; and

Whereas, In Milwaukee, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American communities have historically been under-represented in the Fire and Police Departments; and

Whereas, While Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American make up 65% of Milwaukee's population, they make up just 32% of protective service employees in City employment; and

Whereas, The demographics of the 2019 classes of police officers/aides and firefighters/fire cadets, in comparison to the demographics of the City of Milwaukee, bear out this under-representation, as follows:

	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	White	Native American	Not Specified
Police Officers/Aides	2.9%	31.4%	17.1%	47.1%	--	1.4%
Firefighters/Fire Cadets	4.3%	21.4%	21.4%	52.9%	--	--
City of Milwaukee*	4.3%	38.8%	18.8%	35.3%	0.6%	--

*Data from U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts July 2019

; and

Whereas, Women are likewise under-represented in the sworn ranks of the Police and Fire Departments, with just 14.3% and 21.4%, respectively, of the individuals in the 2019 classes being female, while 51.8% of the population of Milwaukee is female; and

Whereas, The Fire and Police Commission, which is responsible for the selection and appointment of individuals to the Police and Fire Departments, is well-placed to increase the diversity of the membership of the Police and Fire Departments through its recruitment efforts; now, therefore be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Fire and Police Commission is urged to redouble recruitment efforts within Milwaukee neighborhoods so that the Fire and Police Departments are more diverse and reflective of the communities that they serve; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the Fire and Police Commission is urged to present a recruitment plan for the Fire and Police Departments to the Common Council within 6 months of adoption of this resolution.

Dana J. Zelazny
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