

# Milwaukee Ald. Khalif Rainey: Query looks at allowing extended hours at some libraries

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Alderman Khalif J. Rainey is asking the Milwaukee Public Library to explore the cost and feasibility of a pilot program that would allow certain branches to remain open until midnight.

Alderman Rainey said he believes it is important to allow users the opportunity to further their knowledge, research, learning, and career readiness at later hours in some of the city's libraries. "Our branch libraries have evolved and been re-invented significantly over the past 10-15 years, and they are no longer 'just' centers of learning. They and the activities they house are a positive alternative to negative behaviors and ought to be seen as a part of a broad public safety strategy every bit as important as a police station or a squad car," he said.

"Our libraries also provide resources that those most in need of them might not be aware of, including G.E.D. preparation, employment resources, housing assistance and others available at no cost and in locations that are designed to be convenient," Alderman Rainey said.

Alderman Rainey said he has reached out to City Librarian Paula Kiely on the matter, asking her to explore the possibility of extending the closing hours of certain libraries in the interest of making their resources more available to the public. "The days when the world worked on a 9-to-5 shift are long past and I am concerned that many who work late, early, or on weekends are unable to access

libraries and their services,” he said.

Alderman Rainey said he is willing to assist MPL and the Library Board in identifying potential funding to help extend hours at certain branch libraries. For the possible pilot program, he is asking Ms. Kiely to provide a cost estimate for keeping a branch library open until midnight on each day that it is now open.

“I believe our libraries are truly wonderful, positive places where individuals can build and strengthen themselves through knowledge and inspiration,” he said. “In my view having greater library access could result in a stronger workforce and a safer city as people pursue their dreams and turn away from negative temptations.”