

Milwaukee Ald. Russell W. Stamper, II: The time is now for the Disparity Study

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We have been told without question that the city in which we live has been deemed the worst city in America for African Americans. We know firsthand of the historic nature of segregation that has afflicted our great city, past and present. Although we are not the same city in which many of our fathers and mothers marched day after day locked in arms with Father Groppi across the S. 16th St. bridge, we still have many of those same obstacles that riddle our path to greatness as a city. We have to face the truth and that truth is WE KNOW we are not reaching the potential of our city because a large portion of our city is still being left behind. We know of the gaps that exist between those in our community in the areas of education, incarceration, employment, and economic growth. We know we have taken on the challenge of education, incarceration, and employment. What we haven't taken on is the gap that exists in the area of economic growth.

What are we going to do?

Tomorrow my colleagues and I have a defining opportunity to take on that challenge head on. We have an opportunity to advance this city in a direction that closes the gaps in all of those areas - and in particular economic growth. Tomorrow my colleagues and I will vote on whether or not to fund a disparity study that will allow for equal opportunity. In order to do a program that focuses on closing the gaps that exist within our community, the Supreme Court has stated that a disparity

study **MUST** be done. This study will allow us to fall in line with other cities like Houston, Philadelphia, Austin, St. Louis, Kansas City, Jacksonville, Cincinnati, and Portland. All of these cities have conducted disparity studies successfully and have started toward closing that economic gap in their communities.

Our city is in crisis, our economy is in crisis and we can't wait any longer. I look forward to garnering the support of my fellow aldermen and alderwomen tomorrow. The time is now to change the course of Milwaukee. We can do that by funding a disparity study.