

Milwaukee Aldermen and women: Joint statement on state legislature post-election session

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From Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Alderman Ashanti Hamilton, Alderman Michael J. Murphy, Alderman José G. Pérez, Alderman Khalif J. Rainey, Alderman Terry L. Witkowski, Alderman Nik Kovac, Alderman Mark A. Borkowski, Alderman Cavalier Johnson, Alderman Robert J. Bauman, Alderwoman Chantia Lewis, Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II, and Alderwoman Nikiya Dodd

The lame-duck session measures approved by the Republican-controlled state Legislature are aimed at keeping the Legislature in a position of power and hurting Milwaukee. Taxpayers are ill-served by these measures and should be outraged that they are being approved just weeks after Democrats swept every state-wide race in the November 6 fall general election.

We reject the measures and expect that there will be litigation coming forward to oppose them. However, legal challenges would not be necessary if Governor Walker does not sign them - and we urge him to accept the will of Wisconsin voters and NOT sign them into law.

The post-election session legislation includes reducing early voting from six weeks to two weeks, giving lawmakers additional control of the state agency overseeing job creation; reducing the governor's ability to write state rules and adjust public benefits programs; and allowing lawmakers to replace the attorney general with private attorneys at taxpayer expense.

The early voting limit (similar to one struck down by a federal judge in 2016) would

be especially harmful for Milwaukee residents. Milwaukeeans have embraced early voting and the opportunity it provides for making their voices heard and being engaged in local, regional and state-wide concerns.

In the November election there were 36,659 total early votes cast in Milwaukee, meaning the number of early votes cast in the City of Milwaukee for the 2018 midterm election was more than double the total number of 15,300 early votes cast in the 2014 midterm (a whopping 140% increase over 2014).

We believe that is called success and catering to the desires and will of the people. We also believe the provisions just passed are meant to marginalize Milwaukee and keep entrenched legislators in Madison insulated and protected from the effects of the election.

That is called unfair and undemocratic.