

Black Caucus: Letter to Adoption Taskforce

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Representative Dittrich and members of the Task Force on Adoption:

We write today to urge the Task Force on Adoption to host a meeting in the City of Milwaukee. The people of Milwaukee deserve to have their voices heard on an issue that disproportionately affects Milwaukee County and the African American population.

As you may know, Milwaukee County has the highest levels of adoption in the state of Wisconsin. According to the Department of Children and Families, there were 723 children adopted in Wisconsin in FY 2018, with more than one-third of public adoptions in Wisconsin occurring in Milwaukee County. Further, in 2017 there were 2,181 children being served through Out-of-Home care in Milwaukee, compared to the 5,356 being served in Wisconsin's other 71 counties combined.

While it is obvious that adoption is not an area that is unique to Milwaukee, it is an area that significantly affects our city. Beyond these general disparities that exist, Milwaukee's Black population is also disproportionately affected by adoption and the foster care system. African Americans make up 9% of Wisconsin's population but 32% of the foster care population, compared to that of White populations, who make up 71% of the total population but 45% of the foster care population. There are also disproportionate effects on low-income families of color, who are more likely to encounter challenges that increase their likelihood of facing the child welfare system.

With these disparities in mind and with Milwaukee residents and People of Color representing such a large portion of this sector, it is imperative that the community have their voices heard receive representation from the Task Force on Adoption. It is for these reasons that Wisconsin's Legislative Black Caucus strongly urges the Task Force to host a public hearing in the City of Milwaukee.