

Voces de la Frontera: Community organizations send an open letter message to members of the Milwaukee Common Council Steering and Rules Committee: Don't hold the Republican convention in Milwaukee

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(Milwaukee, WI) - We the undersigned community organizations urge you, members of the Steering and Rules Committee, to reject the contract offered from the Republican National Committee and say NO to using Milwaukee to stage its 2024 Convention for the following reasons:

-The \$200,000,000 economic benefit being touted by Visit Milwaukee is a complete myth. It is NOT based on any legitimate economic study, it ignores the economic principle of "opportunity costs," and it is as believable as Foxconn's promise of 13,000 new jobs.

-The most comprehensive study of the economic impact on cities by national conventions demonstrates factually that alleged "economic windfall" for cities from political conventions is Chamber of Commerce public relations boosterism rather than reality.

-Milwaukee has been the proud site of some of the largest general strikes and marches in the country since 2006 with tens of thousands of workers, families and hundreds of small business owners participating in a Day Without Latinxs & Immigrants marching and striking to win immigration reform, restore driver licenses, and challenge racist, anti-immigrant, anti-worker rhetoric and policies. They have done this at great personal economic sacrifice precisely to send a message to our elected officials, of what we need from them. These policies: immigration reform, restoring access to driver licenses, workers rights for a living wage and the right to organize, all of these things our communities need and are being attacked and or blocked by the Republican Party.

This is not Abraham Lincoln's anti-slavery Republican Party. It isn't even John McCain's Republican Party. This is a neo-fascist party inspired by Donald Trump's unapologetic allegiance to white nationalist ideas and a provocation to violence that has declared war on our nation's democracy by enabling and excusing a violent insurrection to overthrow an elected United States government. Indeed the current playbook is to try to steal the elections by any means necessary in the future.

In states like Wisconsin the GOP has attacked basic democratic rights by restricting the right to vote, gerrymandering, and stripping powers from the elected Governor and Attorney General.

-The Wisconsin Republican Party has waged continuous war on Milwaukee by slashing state aid (shared revenue) for the city and counting, restricting the right to vote, wasting taxpayer money on a bogus challenge to the legitimacy of the 2020 elections, and trying to destroy our public schools.

The Republican Party by refusing to enact common sense gun regulations that 80% of Americans favor has enabled the kind of mass carnage in school shootings, churches and nightclubs that have become almost weekly occurrences.

The Republican Party embraces and promotes the “Great Replacement Theory,” a racist theory with roots in Nazi Germany that inspired the mass murderers of African Americans in Buffalo, Latinx people in El Paso, Jews in Pittsburg, and Asians in Atlanta.

-Hosting a neo-fascist organization will require downtown to be turned into a militarized security zone, off-limits to the citizenry, and hostile and unwelcoming to our own essential industry workers, most of which are low income people of color and residents.

-The claim that this convention will put downtown Milwaukee “on the map” is the only legitimate prediction by its supporters. The same violent, conspiracy-touting mobs that attacked the nation’s capital will no doubt show up, armed and belligerent, in a majority of people of color city with the highest numbers of immigrants and refugees in Wisconsin? Our community is exactly who the Republican Party is attacking rhetorically and in their policies and in cruel political stunts like what is happening at the southern border and by making a boogey man of critical race theory. The Republican Party’s escalated attacks on women’s rights, workers rights, immigrant and refugee rights, LGBTQ rights, and the Black Lives Matter movement will of course generate massive protests against them and their policies of hate, violence, and division. Is this the “map” you want Milwaukee on?

-The Republican Convention will not have any positive impact on the vast majority of Milwaukee neighborhoods where most of our people live.

Finally, we ask members of the Steering and Rules Committee if you would view welcoming the 1936 Nazis convention “a business decision?”

Signed,

Voces de la Frontera Action, Power to the Polls, Never Again is Now, SEIU, Freedom Action Now