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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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October 16, 2019

Ald. Cavalier Johnson  
(414) 286-3777

## Council approves legislation on redistricting ballot issue

Yesterday, (**Tuesday, October 15**) the Common Council voted unanimously to approve legislation directing the executive director of the Election Commission to place a non-binding referendum on the April 7, 2020, ballot asking voters whether the City of Milwaukee should request the Wisconsin Legislature to pass a law establishing a non-partisan procedure for drawing legislative district maps.

**Alderman Cavalier Johnson**, the primary sponsor of the legislation (Common Council file #**190826**), said it is critically important to allow citizens to have a voice when it comes to creating legislative maps following the upcoming 2020 Census.

“The Wisconsin State Legislature has the opportunity to establish a non-partisan redistricting procedure for drawing legislative maps that can create a sense of fairness in 2020 and beyond,” Alderman Johnson said.

“The current redistricting process is such that it benefits the members of the Republican-controlled Legislature as demonstrated in recent elections, and will require significant political pressure to change. Adding a referendum on the April 7, 2020, ballot gives the citizens of Milwaukee a chance to weigh in on this issue and show their support for establishing a non-partisan procedure for creating new legislative maps,” he said.

Following the 2010 United States Census, the Wisconsin Legislature established new legislative maps for the state and the partisan procedure by which the Legislature prepared new legislative maps in 2011 was controlled entirely by its Republican members.

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## **Redistricting ballot measure/ADD ONE**

Alderman Johnson said the implementation of those 2011 legislative maps has granted an advantage to Republican candidates for office in Wisconsin in each election since. In 2012, Republican candidates won 60 of the Wisconsin Assembly's 99 seats, even though Democratic candidates won a majority of the statewide Assembly vote. In 2018, the Republican party won 27 more Assembly seats than the Democratic party, even though Democratic candidates received 203,373 more Assembly votes statewide than Republican candidates.

In 2016, a federal court found that in preparing the new legislative maps in 2011, Republican members of the Wisconsin Legislature employed partisan gerrymandering techniques known as cracking and packing to split or concentrate Democratic votes in particular districts in an effort to dilute the voting power of Wisconsin's Democratic electors and to entrench Republican control of the Legislature. While the federal court found that Wisconsin's Democratic voters were burdened by the discriminatory effect of the new legislative maps in both the 2012 and 2014 state elections, the U.S. Supreme Court, in another gerrymandering case, ruled that partisan gerrymandering claims, like those at issue in Wisconsin, cannot be decided by the courts but instead must be resolved through the political process.