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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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## Council members donning denim for a good cause

Several Common Council members will be trading in their suits and business attire for blue jeans this Thursday (March 21) during a noon hour photo shoot at City Hall.

The photos will be posted online and in social media – along with photos of other jean-clad city employees – in support of the **Denim Day** international sexual assault prevention and education campaign.

**Alderman Milele A. Coggs**, a member of the Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, said awareness is important, but so too is change. “We must continue to cultivate a culture where women can safely walk through and engage their communities without fear of assault and the further humiliation of being judged for their clothing or actions. Assault is the crime, not one’s clothing or circumstance,” said Alderman Coggs, who will be photographed with her colleagues on Thursday in the third floor Council Chamber.

**Erin Perkins**, coordinator of the Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, said the photos will be posted on social media throughout the month of April, which is **Sexual Assault Awareness Month**. “The City of Milwaukee is partnering with United Way and Aurora Health Care to promote Denim Day (April 24) and to help raise the profile of Sexual Assault Awareness Month,” Ms. Perkins said.

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## **Denim Day/ADD ONE**

“We are thrilled to have members of the Common Council stepping forward to help with this important campaign,” she said.

The Council members’ photos will be posted next month at <https://www.facebook.com/DenimDayMilwaukee>.

Denim Day was inspired by a rape in 1997 in Rome. A married, 45-year-old driving instructor assaulted an 18-year-old girl during her first driving lesson and was convicted, but the ruling was overturned a year later because the Italian Supreme Court stated that removing tight fitting jeans could not be possible if the victim were struggling; therefore the victim must have assisted the attacker in removing her jeans, which they felt implied consent.

This resulted in women in the Italian Parliament wearing jeans and holding signs that said “Jeans: An Alibi For Rape” as a sign of protest, and California and eventually other states joined as a sign of support and to protest inaccurate assumptions and attitudes about who is to blame for sexual assault.