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Ald. Tony Zielinski
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Mayor Says "No" to Public Debate of MPS Mayoral Control Proposal

*Ald. Tony Zielinski Says he's Hoping Mayor Will Reconsider Chance to Debate
Critical Governance Proposal*

Ald. Tony Zielinski said today he's received a quick "no, thank you" reply from Mayor Tom Barrett on his offer to hold a public debate with the mayor regarding the mayor's proposal to change state law to allow Milwaukee's mayor to appoint the superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools and to do away with the current MPS governance structure of a publicly elected school board.

Yesterday Alderman Zielinski sent an email to Mayor Barrett inviting him to publicly debate the proposal, which would require state legislators to change existing state law. The alderman, who is now the primary sponsor of Common Council legislation that would put the Council on record opposing the mayor's MPS governance change effort, said he's not surprised by the mayor's answer.

"To me the fact that the mayor has refused to debate the primary Council sponsor of legislation to oppose his move to control MPS just shows he's not real confident or strong in his position," Alderman Zielinski said. "Taking away the control of our schools from a duly elected body and turning that control over to the mayor and his or her hand-picked designees is a serious possibility that will affect students, parents, teachers and Milwaukee taxpayers for years, and I really hope the mayor changes his mind and decides to have the matter aired in a lively, respectful and informative public debate that honors the democratic process."

Alderman Zielinski reiterated his statement made Tuesday that he is open and available to debate the issues with the mayor "whenever and wherever" in a public setting with a neutral moderator.