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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Milele A. Coggs
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Mounting Community Opposition to Plans for Everest College, Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs Says

At News Conference, Detractors Criticize Predatory Techniques of For-Profit College

Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs was joined by a strong showing of community leaders and elected officials today in urging the Milwaukee Board of Zoning Appeals to reject a special use permit for Everest College to open in downtown Milwaukee.

During a news conference held in the rotunda of Milwaukee City Hall, Alderwoman Coggs and several members of the Milwaukee Common Council stood beside community leaders and student groups in criticizing the business practices of Everest College, part of Corinthian Colleges Inc.

Alderwoman Coggs, whose 6th Aldermanic District includes the property at N. 6th Street and W. McKinley Ave. where Everest wants to open a branch location, said she is strongly skeptical of the college's purported plans for Milwaukee. "Everest is not an educational institution but rather an educational business with a goal of profit, not placement," she said, adding that the reason there have been so many lawsuits against colleges owned by Corinthian, like Everest, is that they "have a sordid history of promising jobs and transferability of credit to students, but all they deliver is crushing debt."

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Everest College Opposition/ADD ONE

Coggs was supported at the news conference by fellow aldermen Ashanti Hamilton, Nik Kovac, Willie Wade and Tony Zielinski. Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr. was unable to make the event, but has voiced his concerns about the project as well. State Senator Spencer Coggs, who is strongly backing Alderwoman Coggs on the issue, was also unable to attend because of a scheduling conflict.

Pamela Morales-Fuentes, a web design student at Milwaukee Area Technical College and a representative of the MATC Latino Student Organization, pointed out that most low-income students rely on loans to go to college. She said that the Corinthian's loan default rate is two and a half times greater than the national average. "This means that its students have not achieved the jobs they've been promised or the incomes Corinthian marketed to them, with the result that they can't pay back their loans," she said.

Wendell Harris, director of education for the Milwaukee chapter of the NAACP, said that the eight- or nine-month courses that Corinthian charges \$14,000 apiece for do not transfer to any other colleges despite promises made to students to get them to enroll. "Corinthian doesn't even try to get accreditation from the regional accrediting bodies, but they don't explain that to students when they recruit them," Harris said.

Also speaking today against approval of the Everest College permit were Pam Fendt of Good Jobs and Livable Neighborhoods/Citizen Action, and Dr. Michael Rosen, economics professor at MATC.