

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

February 3, 2011

Ald. Milele A. Coggs
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15th Amendment Anniversary Commemorated Today

Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs would like to remind Milwaukeeans that today is the anniversary of the passing of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The amendment declares that “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.” Though the amendment passed on February 3, 1870, obstacles such as literacy tests, poll taxes and other strategies were used to inhibit the rights of voters.

“This amendment is near and dear to my heart and it is important that we all recognize what an incredible right suffrage actually is,” Alderwoman Coggs said. “That’s why it’s so troubling to me that we are amid a discussion of voter I.D. policies.”

The Judiciary and Legislation Committee of the Council voted last week to oppose SB-6, a state legislative move to require certain identification in order to vote at a polling place or obtain an absentee ballot and to verify the addresses of the electors. Coggs said that if this bill passed, it will disproportionately impact people of color, students and the elderly. “In its current state, this bill is the most restrictive voter I.D. legislation in the nation,” Ald. Coggs said. “The city has not fully evaluated the economic feasibility of this legislation or the costs brought to bear on tax payers if we were to implement such standards.”

The bill allows for those who file an absentee vote without proper identification to produce the identification by 4 p.m. the next day. The work involved in such a short turnaround time will greatly impede election staff and could make the city vulnerable to lawsuits.

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Voter I.D./ADD ONE

“This voter I.D. bill flies in the face of the 15th Amendment and I hope it is defeated when it comes before the Council next week. The City of Milwaukee must send a message to the state that we support access to the polls and every citizen’s right to vote,” Alderwoman Coggs said.

The legislative package file will go to the full Common Council when it meets at 9 a.m. on February 8, 2011, in the third floor Council Chamber at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.

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