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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Hines
(414) 286-3771
Ald. Hamilton
(414) 286-2228
Ald. Zielinski
(414) 286-2873

Council forges ahead on directives to address black male unemployment

Alderman Willie L. Hines, Jr., the primary sponsor of a Common Council measure Tuesday to reactivate the African American Male Unemployment Task Force (AAMUTF), was successful in securing full support from the Council to forge ahead with working on specific directives to address unemployment in the African American community.

Alderman Hines said the task force was briefly on hiatus as its membership and mission were reviewed. “Black male employment is at a ‘level one’ crisis, as a recent study by UW-Milwaukee researchers shows that the already very poor employment situation for African American males in Milwaukee is actually getting worse,” said Alderman Hines, who also serves as Common Council president.

“With white men in Milwaukee enjoying an employment rate of 77% and African American males barely reaching a 45% employment rate (according to the UWM study), we must do everything we can to look for possible initiatives and long-term solutions to change that disheartening statistic,” Alderman Hines said.

Alderman Ashanti Hamilton, a co-sponsor of the AAMUTF measure and a task force co-chair, said there is an urgent need to find ways to address the black male unemployment crisis in Milwaukee. “We cannot risk losing an entire new generation of potential skilled workers and professionals to chronic unemployment and underemployment,” he said. “We need to work now to ensure Milwaukee has a labor force that is ready and attractive to prospective new companies and employers.”

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Task Force Reactivated/ADD ONE

Alderman Tony Zielinski, also a co-sponsor of the AAMUTF measure and co-chair of the task force, pointed to one of the task force's first successful projects -- the initiative by **Growing Power** to create 150 agricultural jobs in the inner city at Milwaukee neighborhood greenhouses (or hoop houses) -- as positive progress. "The Growing Power project is a positive step that is already moving forward, and we must continue build on that success to develop and attract similar job-creating initiatives that can put people in our inner city in good-paying jobs," Alderman Zielinski said.

The membership of the AAMUTF has a cross section of representatives from various organizations and backgrounds including Running Rebels, the Milwaukee Workforce Investment Board and the church community.