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November 5, 2014

Ald. José G. Pérez  
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## Milwaukee Children's Zone to address achievement gap on the near south side

Stakeholders from around Milwaukee's near south side will be brought together in order to seek solutions to an achievement gap affecting less fortunate neighborhoods, **Alderman José G. Pérez** said. The creation of an executive committee to guide the **Milwaukee Children's Zone** initiative is just the first step in a measure he sponsored that was approved today on a unanimous vote by the Milwaukee Common Council.

"The near south side is home to a greater proportion of the city's children than the city as a whole, yet offers them fewer opportunities," Alderman Pérez said. "There are many great programs already underway to address these disparities, but this initiative will allow us to expand those, coordinate on new programs and fill in any gaps."

According to analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau, 38.8 percent of the near south side's population is under the age of 20, compared to 31 percent citywide. Yet more than 47 percent of families in this area have annual incomes less than \$25,000 compared to 36.2 percent citywide, and the percentage of teenagers aged 18 or 19 who are enrolled in school is 53 percent (76.9 percent citywide).

Based on a national model originally developed in Harlem, the Milwaukee Children's Zone initiative will partner city and county agencies with faith-based institutions, nonprofit social service providers, healthcare facilities and other neighborhood institutions to seek multi-faceted solutions to these disparities. An executive committee of seven members will guide the selection of a 33-member blueprint commission, which will work to develop and propose a five-year plan for the initiative.

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