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CAVALIER JOHNSON
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

Resolution reevaluating employment age moves forward

Statement of Alderman Cavalier Johnson October 30, 2017

Today the Milwaukee Common Council's Judiciary and Legislation Committee recommended adoption of file 171046 – *Resolution directing the Department of Administration – Intergovernmental Relations Division to seek introduction and passage of legislation altering the ages at which young people are eligible for certain types of employment.* As someone who benefitted from work opportunities as a teenager, I am grateful that the committee decided to move forward with the legislation that I sponsored.

The resolution asks for state lawmakers to reevaluate the ages that young people are able to obtain certain types of employment, and where appropriate, allow for more youths to be able to access employment that they are currently unable to obtain. With a youth poverty rate at more than 30% in 2014, a high school graduation rate of just over 60% in that same year, along with a Milwaukee Police Department reported 163% increase in juvenile arrests between 2011 and 2015, and the exorbitant cost of juvenile incarceration for Milwaukee County taxpayers, it only makes sense for policy makers to seek preventive front end measures that empower youth and reduce the likelihood that they become involved in the justice system.

We've all heard stories about people in their youth making decisions that don't bode well for their immediate and long-term future, and sometimes for the greater public safety. My legislation works to create greater alternative opportunities for young people in our community and in our state by opening more doors to employment.

I hope that members of the State Legislature decide to take up the issue.

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