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KHALIF J. RAINEY
ALDERMAN, 7TH DISTRICT

New report reinforces urgent need for Office of African American Affairs

Statement of Alderman Khalif J. Rainey November 19, 2018

Once again Milwaukee has been ranked one of the worst cities in the nation for black people. The news site 24/Wall St. ranks Milwaukee number two in the Worst Cities for Black Americans stating the typical black household in Milwaukee earns just \$27,834 a year — 42.5% of the \$65,568 white median household income. While the white poverty rate in Milwaukee of 7.6% is one of the lowest in the country, the black poverty rate of 36.4% is among the highest.

The report lists factors behind these disparities including segregation, while an expounded article in USA Today lays out day-to-day implications of segregation and its impact on the labor market. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2018/11/16/racial-disparity-cities-worst-metro-areas-black-americans/38460961/>

As the City of Milwaukee is profoundly affected by segregation and structural barriers surrounding race, this report speaks to the need to establish an Office of African American Affairs (OAAA) as soon as possible. I successfully sponsored legislation two years ago to create the OAAA. I am very thankful Mayor Barrett included \$800,000 in the proposed 2019 city budget which was passed by my colleagues on the Common Council last week.

With the location established at 4830 W. Fond du Lac Ave. the OAAA will be a one-stop shop promoting equal opportunities for African American residents in areas including business ownership, job creation, job training, home ownership, health care and education. While building renovations could begin early next year, I cannot emphasize enough the urgent need to develop this center and to maintain if not expand its momentum to be a positive force for better and richer lives.

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