

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

March 8, 2019

Ald. Khalif J. Rainey
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Common Council to vote on doula funding legislation

The Public Safety and Health Committee yesterday (**Thursday, March 7**) recommended for approval new legislation that would develop a pilot program to provide doulas to 100 new mothers in the 53206 Zip Code. The program would be funded by the city and administrated by the Milwaukee Health Department.

Common Council **File #181754**, a resolution sponsored by **Alderman Khalif J. Rainey** and in collaboration with **Milwaukee County Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic**, would provide \$52,000 in funding for doulas (birth companions) to improve birth and maternal health in Milwaukee's 53206 Zip Code (the funding would be identified by Alderman Rainey and would match the County's contribution). This pilot program is in partnership with the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services and aims to create better health outcomes for mothers and their babies. Doula services have shown to lessen stress and anxiety, reduce cesarean surgery rates, and support higher rates of breastfeeding. This new program is part of the state-wide initiative "Healthy Women, Healthy Babies" led by Governor Tony Evers which expands women's access to health care and combats infant mortality. Governor Evers has already allocated \$618,000 to fund doula training in his 2019-21 Budget.

"I was born and raised in the 53206 Zip Code and have seen firsthand the lack of maternal health resources available to mothers and their newborns and its effects," said Ald. Rainey. "We could not properly celebrate Women's History Month if we do not acknowledge the ongoing maternal health disparities found in 53206. This legislation will not only help empower women and give them the necessary resources for a healthy pregnancy, but build a healthier, stronger Milwaukee."

The file next goes to the full Common Council on Tuesday, March 26 at 9:00 a.m. for a final vote. This meeting will be televised live on the City Channel (Channel 25 on Spectrum Cable and on AT&T U-Verse Channel 99) in the City of Milwaukee. It can also be viewed via streaming video on the City website at milwaukee.gov/Channel25.