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KHALIF J. RAINEY
ALDERMAN, 7TH DISTRICT

Doulas just the tip of the iceberg for the 53206

Statement of Alderman Khalif J. Rainey April 2, 2019

Today's public signing ceremony to launch a pilot doula project to help boost healthier birth outcomes for infants and expectant mothers in the 53206 ZIP code was uplifting and inspiring.

It was uplifting because it could help provide a much-needed set of programming that will foster healthier infants and expectant mothers in my home area – the 53206 – where we've long needed stepped up, better care and planning for such a critically important public health area. I want to commend my city colleagues for their strong support of the initiative and also Milwaukee County for their partnership in helping make the doula project a reality.

It was inspiring because as primary sponsor of the Common Council legislation to create the pilot initiative, I see it as just the tip of the iceberg for the 53206 and what could and should come next to help improve an area that is ground zero for shocking disparities in health, wealth, business development, food and nutrition, employment and educational achievement.

The glaring need to open the Office of African American Affairs on W. Fond du Lac Ave. – in the community and staffed fully to assist residents in helping to push back against the disparities – should be near the top of our list. We need to make the OAAA a top level priority and have it open no later than this fall. Our citizens need to have the Office open and providing resources ASAP.

With the Democratic National Convention bringing the world to Milwaukee in July 2020, we have the prime opportunity to shine a light on what ails urban America by focusing on the 53206 and bringing attention to the work that needs to be done to improve life for our citizens and for future generations. With political leaders helping to attract the attention of the nation and the world on Milwaukee and the deep disparities and human rights issues that exist just a few miles from our shiny downtown, this is an opportunity that we must demand be taken advantage of.

I encourage my colleagues and citizens to join the effort to keep the focus on the 53206 and to continue to work to close the overall quality of life gap that exists there.

This is just the beginning!

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