



City of Milwaukee Equal Rights Commission

Commissioners

Chez Ordonez, Chair
Tony Snell, Vice Chair
Mayhoua Moua
Nathan Guequierre

Jennifer Bennett
Martha Collins
Jessica Boling
William Crowley

Director of Administration

Sharon Robinson

Equal Rights Specialist

Jessica Langill

For Immediate Release - March 19, 2020

The ERC Stands with Our Asian Communities and Against All Forms of Discrimination

The City of Milwaukee Equal Rights Commission (ERC) would like to thank Mayor Tom Barrett and Governor Tony Evers for acting swiftly to declare COVID-19 a public health emergency and healthcare workers for fighting the pandemic.

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, it is certain that the number of cases will continue to rise and demand a coordinated and comprehensive response – one that will require all of us to do our part to help halt the spread of the virus.

The ERC is aware of disturbing incidents of discrimination – based on unfounded xenophobic fears - directed at Asian communities, particularly in Chinese communities in other cities. Anxiety and fear surrounding any outbreak or incident should never be a reason to discriminate against any group or individual. We stand for equal rights for all people and warn the public to not stigmatize people based on race, national origin, age, health condition, or disability.

The ERC is also aware of the potential of discrimination toward people who have tested positive or are recovering from COVID-19. Clearly, we have seen this happen before during other public health emergencies such as during the wake of the HIV/AIDS global pandemic.

Acts of discrimination will not be tolerated in Milwaukee and are a potential violation of local, state, and federal law. If you believe you or someone you know may have been discriminated against relating to COVID-19 or in general, please contact the Equal Rights Commission Office at ERC@milwaukee.gov.

This is also a very difficult time for people at higher risk for COVID-19 complications such as the elderly, people with underlying health conditions, and people with health-related anxiety. With the added stress and limitations, coupled with an overburdened healthcare system, please be sure to go the extra mile to support these populations and their families.

COVID-19 will eventually subside, but the Equal Rights Commission asks that every resident treat each other with kindness, compassion, and empathy not only until it does, but after the crisis ends as well.

###