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MILELE A. COGGS
ALDERWOMAN, 6TH DISTRICT

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Sending Milwaukee to the polls has never been this frightening **Aldерwoman Coggs raises key questions ahead of Tuesday's election**

Statement of Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs **April 3, 2020**

With the ruling yesterday by a federal judge that the April 7 election should go forward as planned, I have grave concerns about the safety of our citizens and our election workers.

While city and state partners continue to discuss a possible Election Day postponement and a vote-by-mail only election, the grim reality is that just today members of the Common Council and the public learned about the five voting centers where voters from all 15 Aldermanic Districts will be required to go for in-person voting on Tuesday.

Despite the efforts to avoid in-person voting on Tuesday, we are faced with the very real possibility that thousands of voters and reduced ranks of election workers could be packed together for hours during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of Milwaukee.

How will each of the voting centers truly enforce social distancing?

Will children be allowed at the voting centers?

What will happen if a person who is showing symptoms of illness arrives at a voting center?

What exactly will the role be of the National Guard volunteers at the voting centers?

Importantly, I am very concerned that the voting centers will be overwhelmed with thousands of people who will be required to wait in line for long periods – in close quarters – while they wait to register and to vote. I am remembering the recent photos and videos of travelers who were

crammed into airport corridors and Customs areas, and I fear we might have similar scenes here at the voting centers.

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The crowded quarters will sadly provide prime conditions for COVID-19 spread, and I want to know if there are any preparations being made for the aftermath. Afterward will poll workers have their temperatures taken for 72 hours, or will they be required to quarantine for 14 days? Which government agencies (city/state) will be involved in monitoring them?

Are city and state partners making plans for additional hospital beds for the possibly hundreds (or thousands?) of sick voters and poll workers who may come down with COVID-19?

With this being the first week of the month we are seeing unsafe crowding at corner stores and other neighborhood locations where people are shopping for food and other items. This crowding and lack of social distancing is also very worrisome to me (and many others on the Council) and I want more information from city departments on how they plan to address those issues.

I urge all residents to take the necessary steps and precautions to protect themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please be safe and stay home as much as possible to help prevent infections and the spread of the virus.

Voters can apply for absentee ballots until the close of business today (April 3), and absentee ballots must be counted if they are returned by April 13. Please go to myvote.wi.gov to request your absentee ballot.

Expanded in-person absentee voting is happening today, tomorrow (Saturday) and on Sunday at the Zeidler Municipal Building (at E. Kilbourn and N. Broadway) from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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