

From: [Dipesh Navsaria](#)
To: [Common Council Executive Committee](#)
Subject: Comments regarding Committee Reorganization
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To the City of Madison's Common Council Executive Committee —

I am writing regarding items 4 & 5 of the 25 February meeting, regarding the proposed reorganization of the City Boards, Commissions, and Committees. I am opposed to this proposal as it relates to the Early Child Care and Education Committee, which I have served on for a number of years as a pediatrician. I am out of town in DC doing advocacy for home visiting programs on the date of the meeting, so am unable to comment during the meeting itself, hence my written comments.

First, I understand and value the desire to reduce the workload on City staff and alders, who indeed have a lot on their plate. However, I am concerned that a merging of committees that are vaguely thematically related will instead result in that successor committee becoming log-jammed with members spending a great deal of time explaining to others about their area of expertise, and being educated on other topics on which they have no connection. There is a high risk that otherwise qualified committee members will depart or not choose to spend their time serving if there is a higher proportion of time spent on topics which do not relate to their area of interest or expertise.

Speaking about Early Childhood, I can easily see a great number of programs, systems, and elements that are specific to early childhood that do matter and that I have no expectation that someone from, say, the Committee on Aging would know about. The YoungStar program, NAEYC accreditation, DCF licensing requirements alone are key to this area and would take extraordinary amounts of time to explain to others not in this world. Likewise, the funding sources and programs relevant to the current Committee on Aging are unfamiliar to me, and to assume that I would wish to take on the additional overhead of learning about those programs is an incorrect assumption. I would be rather anxious about making decisions or recommendations based on very little knowledge or information about the subject at hand.

Interestingly, I have informally suggested to staff that our committee actually should have a broader remit — not only about care and education, but should become a broader Committee on Early Childhood, looking at other elements relevant to the world of children birth to age 5 years and their families. Rather than diluting Early Childhood — as this proposal does — we should be asking how Madison can better address the key first 2000 days of life for all children. As a community which continues to suffer great racial and ethnic disparities in infant morbidity and mortality, we should be focusing on early childhood, not hiding it within our committee structures.

I urge the Executive Committee to remove this portion of the proposal and perhaps consider instead broadening the remit of the committee to cover Early Childhood more broadly.

Peace and Prosperity,
Dipesh

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