



Legislation Text

File #: 36405, **Version:** 2

Fiscal Note

No appropriation required.

Title

SUBSTITUTE - Recognizing the role of the Common Council in addressing institutionalized bias and proactively advancing racial equity.

Body

WHEREAS, the St. Louis County grand jury did not indict Ferguson, MO police officer Darren Wilson for fatally shooting Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenage youth, on August 9; and,

WHEREAS, this case can be viewed both as the action of a single police officer, as well as from the vantage point of institutional practices and our larger society and the spotlight on Ferguson has revealed with a renewed and sharper focus the deep divide in our society with persistent systemic inequities; and,

WHEREAS, racial inequities exist across all indicators for success, not only in Ferguson, but across the county, including in Madison, Wisconsin and these inequities are deep and pervasive and exist not only within the criminal justice system, but also in education, health, jobs, housing, and many other areas; and,

WHEREAS, many in the United States, even those who embrace egalitarian norms, harbor unconscious negative associations based on race; and,

WHEREAS, because of the government's role in serving the public, government is uniquely positioned to address the pervasiveness of unconscious biases, first by recognizing and acknowledging bias, and secondly by working to reduce bias, both individually and within government; and,

WHEREAS, efforts to address unconscious bias and proactively advance racial equity can repair and strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and communities of color, thereby strengthening the ability for police departments to serve and protect all communities; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Madison, as an institution, recognizes its role in addressing institutionalized bias and racism, and is working proactively to transform government practice through the Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative and Multicultural Affairs Committee, building upon past and current racial equity efforts;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council of the City of Madison:

1. Offer the deepest of condolences to the family of Michael Brown and the community of Ferguson. Our thoughts and deepest empathy respect go out to the Brown family for all the ways that that the lack of an indictment deepens their pain and suffering; and
2. Call on the Missouri Attorney General or the U.S. Attorney General to conduct a full and complete investigation of the Ferguson shooting to help ensure justice is served ~~so that there is a possibility for justice to be served~~; and
3. Commit to working with appointed officials and our public servants, including police officers - for racial

equity. We recognize where we have power and influence, and will work within government, in partnership with other sectors and with the community to achieve racial equity. Although racial inequities are deep and pervasive, we do not believe they are a given. We believe that we have the power to achieve equity for all of our communities; and

4. Will work with and support our own police department's efforts to work proactively for racial equity. We support the Madison Police Department's many strategies already in place, including training for police officers in addressing implicit bias and de-escalation strategies, as well as repairing and building relationships with communities, especially communities of color; and
5. Commit to remove the structural barriers that prevent our society from being just and inclusive - and towards one that cares about and provides justice for the lives of all people through continuing support of the City of Madison Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative.