



February 1, 2018

Ald. Tony Zielinski  
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## **Resolution aims to take down Milwaukee Health Department's restrictive communication policy**

**Alderman Tony Zielinski** is introducing a resolution to prohibit departments from enacting policies restricting employees from communicating with elected city officials. This resolution will prohibit any policy which aims to stifle whistle-blowers.

Yesterday, during a special meeting of the **Steering & Rules Committee**, employees from the **Milwaukee Health Department** briefed Common Council members on lead laterals and risks to city drinking water, as well as other sources of lead contaminants that are impacting vulnerable populations such as women in reproductive years and children. During the meeting, Alderman Zielinski was appalled to learn from MHD employees that there is a written policy restricting workers from speaking directly to elected officials.

Alderman Zielinski says his resolution will slash down that policy, "The policy is a disgrace, and it likely restricted workers from coming forward sooner. Had city employees been able to come forward sooner, greater steps toward prevention could have been taken and perhaps fewer children would have been negatively impacted. My resolution will prohibit all departments from being able to enact a troubling policy like this."

Many colleagues have expressed interest in joining as co-sponsors of the resolution, including **Alderman Milele A. Coggs, Alderman Jim Bohl, President Ashanti Hamilton, Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II, Alderman Mark Borkowski,** and **Alderman Cavalier Johnson**, with other members expected to join in. This issue will be further examined during the full Common Council meeting at **9 a.m. on Tuesday, February 6** in the third floor Common Council Chamber at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St. Alderman Zielinski is calling on Mayor Tom Barrett to sign the resolution immediately after the Common Council passes it.

If adopted, the Health Department would be required to rescind its communication policy and replace it with one that allows employees the opportunity to be able to speak with elected city officials.