



July 10, 2020

Alderman Cavalier Johnson
Milwaukee City Hall
200 East Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Delivered via electronic mail

Re: Business Community Expresses Concerns with Proposed Mask Ordinance

Dear Council President Johnson:

My name is Kurt Bauer, President and CEO of Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC), and I wish to comment on Milwaukee's proposed mask ordinance (Ordinance) scheduled to be voted on by the Common Council on Monday, July 13th.

WMC is the state chamber of commerce, manufacturers association, and state safety council as well as the largest general business association in Wisconsin. We were founded in 1911, and represent approximately 4,000 member companies of all sizes, and from every sector of our economy, many of which are located in the City of Milwaukee. Our mission is to make Wisconsin the most competitive state in the nation in which to do business. One way WMC works to make our mission a reality is to protect Wisconsin businesses from unfair regulatory burdens, which is exactly what this Ordinance imposes on local businesses.

WMC is not here to debate the efficacy of masks, in fact we encourage our membership to take appropriate precautions – including wearing masks – to protect the health of their employees and customers. However, the business community is deeply concerned about the enforcement provision in the Ordinance.

The Ordinance would require *individuals* to wear masks in public, including in businesses open to the public, but penalize *businesses* \$50-500 per violation when *individuals violate the ordinance*. Businesses are not law enforcement agencies and this Ordinance will create unnecessary (potentially violent) conflict between employees of these businesses and clients/customers. Further, the Ordinance could open up potential civil liability for job creators.

If the City chooses to place new regulatory burdens on the general public, then the City – not businesses – should shoulder the burden of enforcing them. We respectfully request the Ordinance be amended to address our concerns.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kurt Bauer
President & CEO

cc: Mayor Tom Barrett
Members, Milwaukee Common Council