



## **Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors** *Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson, 5th District*

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# **Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson Reflects on First Year Leading Board of Supervisors**

MILWAUKEE – In a statement reflecting on her first year leading the Board of Supervisors, Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson thanked her colleagues for their support and collaboration, reflected on a year of firsts, and looked toward the future.

*“The past year has been difficult for all of us, and I want to thank my fellow Supervisors for their patience as we transitioned to holding all of our meetings virtually. Despite this challenge, we accomplished a great deal as we continued to pursue our goal of achieving racial equity, and that’s something we should all be proud of. I’m energized by the collaborative spirit we have fostered and look forward to working with my fellow Supervisors and County Executive Crowley’s administration in the second half of the term.”*

Milwaukee County adopted several policy proposals from Chairwoman Nicholson during her first year as Chairwoman, including:

- [Creation of the Audit Committee](#), which provides a mechanism for ensuring that policies and programs align with the County ordinances, in particular the racial equity ordinance.
- [A resolution condemning racial injustice](#) across the United States and in Milwaukee County and seeking the dismantling of institutional and structural racism, and requesting reports from the Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office, Department of Transportation, and Circuit Court about policies and practices to achieve racial equity
- [A resolution supporting the City of Milwaukee’s SafeVote program](#) for the Fall 2020 General Election.
- [A resolution calling upon the United States Congress to repeal the 1994 Crime Bill](#), and calling upon Congress to pass and the President to sign, the People’s Justice Guarantee.
- [A resolution to allocate \\$35,000](#) to the Local 212 Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) [Faculty and Students Together Fund \(FAST Fund\)](#) to mitigate student housing insecurity so students can graduate and become successful.
- A resolution encouraging all Milwaukee Counties and the State of Wisconsin work towards [eliminating systemic racism and inequality](#).
- A resolution [establishing Juneteenth as a “major” County holiday](#).
- [A resolution honoring Women’s History Month](#) and requesting an audit on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the intersection of gender and racial equity in Milwaukee County, and requesting the Department of Human Resources provide information on policy changes needed to improve racial and gender equity for female employees;

- [A resolution and ordinance creating the Health Equity, Human Needs, and Strategic Planning Committee](#), to enable the Board of Supervisors to provide better oversight of various departments and their work to implement the County's [vision and strategic plan](#) for achieving racial equity.
- [A resolution that commits Milwaukee County to becoming carbon neutral by 2050](#) and requests that the County's Director of Sustainability develop and administer a strategic plan to achieve carbon neutrality in Milwaukee County facilities and operations by 2020.
- A [resolution](#) that furthers Milwaukee County's commitment to advancing climate change solutions by officially joining the [Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition](#).
- [A proposal to phase out single-use plastics](#) and other non-biodegradable products from Milwaukee County facilities and parks, by 2022.

Chairwoman Nicholson [proposed](#) that Milwaukee County declare racism a public health crisis in April of 2019. The initial step of declaring racism a public health crisis was followed by a racial equity [ordinance](#) in April 2020, which Nicholson also sponsored.

Nicholson also focused on community engagement in her first year and with a series of virtual panel discussions with policy makers, thought leaders, community organizers, and others about the day-to-day impact of systemic and institutional racism called "[Chats with the Chairwoman](#)."

In the fall of 2020, Chairwoman Nicholson led the Board's work to [set and adopt a final Milwaukee County budget for 2021](#) that included an omnibus amendment from the Chairwoman. The Chairwoman's [amendment](#) invested an additional nearly \$2.8 million in programs and services to promote racial equity, including more funding for County parks, youth programming, housing services, and services for seniors.

Chairwoman Nicholson also expanded on the ways that residents can participate in County government by creating a [virtual portal](#) that allows residents to speak in real time to standing committees, and she held an unprecedented virtual public hearing on the 2021 budget.

In her first year, the Chairwoman also supported entrepreneurs and small business owners by [engaging](#) with these groups on how they can work with the County, helped lead the County's response to the Coronavirus pandemic by educating the public about how to stay healthy and by [promoting the Covid-19 vaccine](#) to combat vaccine hesitancy, and focused on [sustainability](#).

Chairwoman Nicholson also received several awards and recognitions during her first year as Chair. Madison 365 named her one of Wisconsin's "[51 Most Influential Black Leaders](#)", the Milwaukee Business Journal named her a [Milwaukee Area Power Broker](#), TEMPO Milwaukee included her in their [Emerging Women Leaders group](#), a network of "rising stars and high achievers," and the national organization Young Elected Officials included her on their "[35 under 35](#)" list which recognizes "passionate and impactful young elected leaders at all levels of government who have advanced progressive change and made meaningful impact on their communities," and she received the Democratic Party of Milwaukee Rising Star Award.

[Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson](#) is the first Afro-Latina and first woman of color to serve as Chairperson of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. She is in her third term as a Supervisor, having first been elected to represent the 5<sup>th</sup> District in April 2016.