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Across the Board

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Milele Coggs got it right on Milwaukee streetcar

By Ernst-Ulrich Franzen for the Journal Sentinel Editorial Board

Dec. 17, 2014

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Those aldermen who are using the [Milwaukee streetcar project](#) to further their own political ambitions and create more divisiveness within the city received the perfect rejoinder from Ald. Milele Coggs Tuesday.

Aldermen Bob Donovan and Joe Davis – both of whom have said they'll run for mayor in 2016 - again complained about the project, with Davis calling the project racist and immoral and invoking the tragic death of Dontre Hamilton as a reason to vote against it.

Coggs wasn't having it. From her seat in the council chambers she angrily replied:

"Instead of so much posturing, instead of so much name calling, instead of so much characterization of those who choose to support and not support the streetcar, we should discuss this on the merits," she said.

"It is not that you care about the community or poverty or police brutality — or you care about the streetcar.

"It is not one or the other.

"Milwaukee has a lot of work to do in a million different areas, but just because we have that work to do doesn't mean we should miss the economic opportunity for growth that we have in front of us," Coggs said.

Exactly right. The streetcar is a simple economic development tool - nothing more or less - that can help Milwaukee create new jobs and business.

Using it as a cudgel to beat up Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, who has correctly pushed for the project, is just playing politics.

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