



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

JOSEPH J. CZARNEZKI • COUNTY CLERK

MEMO

DATE: June 19, 2013
TO: The Honorable County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Joseph J. Czarnezki, County Clerk
SUBJECT: File Returned Unsigned

The County Executive has returned to my office, without his signature of approval, the following file:

File No. 13-411 – A resolution by Supervisor Weishan, authorizing and directing Corporation Counsel to retain outside legal counsel to review the provisions of State Reform Legislation (AB85 and SB95) to assess the authority of its provisions and to provide guidance on the implementation of all State imposed governance changes in Milwaukee County.

This resolution was adopted by a vote of 14 ayes – 4 noes at your meeting of May 23, 2013 and remains in full force and effect.

Joseph J. Czarnezki, County Clerk



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Milwaukee County

CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DATE: June 18, 2013

TO: The Honorable Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: County Executive Chris Abele

RE: County Board File 13-411: a resolution directing Corporation Counsel to seek outside counsel on the implementation of Wisconsin Act 14.

While I disagree with this action, out of respect for the County Board's preference on this matter, I am not vetoing this resolution. Nonetheless, I feel it's important to let the Board and the public know that I believe this action unnecessarily wastes tax dollars and sets a bad precedent. Specifically, setting the precedent that elected leaders can ask taxpayers to foot an outside counsel bill every time they disagree with Corporation Counsel is both costly to our community and troubling in its implications.

When Corporation Counsel Kimberly Walker was asked directly by Supervisor Staskunas during a committee hearing if her office could provide an unbiased opinion on Act 14, she said yes. Specifically she told him and the committee they can and do provide "unbiased opinions in this particular matter and all matters."

That answer was good enough for Supervisor Staskunas, who is a practicing attorney, and it should be good enough for the rest of the Board.

Corporation Counsel represents the legal interests of the County. It is their responsibility to interpret all laws that affect the County, regardless how politicians may feel about a particular issue. Consistent with §59.42(b), the County should continue using Corporation Counsel for legal opinions and only use outside counsel when Corporation Counsel informs us that they have a conflict of interest or are unable to provide an opinion.