

1 By Supervisors Nicholson, O'Connor, Johnson, Jr.,
2 Bielinski, Taylor (5), Martin, Gómez-Tom, Capriolo,
3 Shea, Vincent, Martinez, Coggs-Jones, and Rolland
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File No. 25-705

7 **A RESOLUTION**
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9 Declaring food apartheid a public health emergency in Milwaukee County and directing
10 County action to address food insecurity during the Federal government shutdown
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13 WHEREAS, on October 31, 2025, Governor Tony Evers declared a State
14 of Emergency in response to the ongoing federal government shutdown, which
15 has jeopardized access to vital programs that safeguard the health, safety, and
16 economic security of Wisconsin residents; and
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18 WHEREAS, these programs include FoodShare benefits, Head Start
19 services, and affordable healthcare, and their impairment threatens food security,
20 family stability, and local economies; and
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22 WHEREAS, the disruption of critical federal programs includes the
23 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps nearly 700,000
24 Wisconsin residents, including families, seniors, and children, afford nutritious
25 food; and
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27 WHEREAS, the potential loss of SNAP benefits has heightened concerns
28 about food insecurity and limited access to affordable, healthy, and culturally
29 appropriate food options in many Milwaukee County neighborhoods; and
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31 WHEREAS, on May 20, 2019, the Milwaukee County Board of
32 Supervisors declared racism a public health crisis and committed to embedding
33 racial equity into all County budgeting, policymaking, and service delivery; and
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35 WHEREAS, food apartheid describes the deliberate, racialized systems of
36 disinvestment and market practices that restrict access to nutritious, affordable,
37 and culturally relevant food in communities of color; and
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39 WHEREAS, the closure of grocery stores and pharmacies has
40 disproportionately impacted Black, Latino, and low-income residents of
41 Milwaukee County, worsening inequities in diet-related diseases, infant mortality,
42 life expectancy, and medication access; and
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44 WHEREAS, in the Metcalfe Park neighborhood, more than 40 percent of
45 residents live in poverty and more than one in four households lack access to a
46 car, forcing many seniors and families to rely on public transportation or shared
47 rides to reach grocery stores and pharmacies in other neighborhoods; and

48 WHEREAS, Metcalfe Park, a historically Black community in Milwaukee
49 County, is experiencing food apartheid following the July 2025 closure of the
50 area's only full-service grocery store, further limiting access to nutritious and
51 affordable food; and

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53 WHEREAS, local leaders, news outlets, and public health advocates have
54 described Metcalfe Park's conditions as an example of food apartheid,
55 emphasizing that this crisis arises from structural inequities rather than natural
56 scarcity; and

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58 WHEREAS, the Committee on Finance-Budget, at its special meeting of
59 November 6, 2025, recommended adoption of File No. 25-705 (vote 7-0); now,
60 therefore,

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62 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
63 declares food apartheid to be a public health emergency in Milwaukee County, a
64 condition further exacerbated by the ongoing federal government shutdown and
65 acutely affecting neighborhoods such as Metcalfe Park; and

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67 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Board of
68 Supervisors requests the Office of Equity, in coordination with the Department of
69 Health and Human Services, to incorporate measures of food apartheid and
70 related disparities into the County's racial equity budget tool; and

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72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Health and Human
73 Services and the Office of Equity are requested to collaborate with state,
74 municipal, and community partners to identify strategies and potential
75 interventions to address food apartheid in Milwaukee County, beginning with
76 Metcalfe Park; and

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78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Health and Human
79 Services and the Office of Equity shall provide a report to the Milwaukee County
80 Board of Supervisors during the March 2026 committee cycle with recommended
81 actions and policy options for addressing food apartheid in Milwaukee County.

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