



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Chris Abele

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DATE: July 29, 2014

TO: The Honorable Milwaukee Board of Supervisors

FROM: Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive

RE: Veto of County Board File No. 14-529, a resolution putting a non-binding, advisory referendum question on the November 4, 2014 ballot regarding management of Milwaukee County.

I am vetoing County Board File No. 14-529 pursuant to the authority granted to me by Article IV, Section 23(a) of the Wisconsin Constitution and Section 59.17(6) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

The County Board adopted a resolution on June 26, 2014 calling for a non-binding, advisory referendum to change state law to allow Milwaukee County to replace an elected County Executive with an administrator hired by the County Board.

As I've said time and time again, I believe these non-binding, advisory referendums are not the best use of our tax dollars.

As policymakers, one of our most important roles is to prioritize how our limited tax dollars are spent. The Comptroller's Office estimates putting this referendum on the ballot will cost \$25,000 to \$40,000 and will require us to take that money from the contingency fund. This referendum, coupled with the three others the Board has approved could cost taxpayers as much as \$160,000.

In the past, some Supervisors have questioned the legitimacy of the extra cost of referendum questions. I'll defer to the Comptroller and Election Commission for their estimate but it is my understanding that every question put on the ballot has a cost for ink, increasing the size of the paper, programming voting machines and required advertising and voter awareness.

Like you, I believe an open and fair democracy is key to a strong and sustainable government. However, I believe there are less costly and more productive ways to move the debate forward and certainly more ways to use tax dollars to directly benefit the public we serve.

I know Supervisors have the best intentions when they introduce these resolutions. However, spending down our contingency fund on non-essential items when we are looking at a shrinking surplus this year and a predicted structural deficit of \$31.9 million in 2015 is not the best use of taxpayer money.

I urge you to sustain this veto.