



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Milwaukee County

CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DATE: May 2, 2013

TO: The Honorable Milwaukee Board of Supervisors

FROM: Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive

RE: Veto of County Board File No. 13-384 on a resolution opposing reform of the Milwaukee County Board

I am vetoing County Board File No. 13-384 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 April 25, 2013 opposing State Assembly Bill 85 (AB 85) and Senate Bill 95 (SB 95).

I am vetoing this resolution because I do not believe it represents the best interest of the County or the opinions of the majority of the community.

In April of 2012, 30,000 people went to the polls and voted for significant reform of the County Board, reform that is mirrored in AB 85/SB 95. By opposing this legislation, you are opposing the expressed will of the people and preventing voters from having their voices heard on the future of the County Board through a binding referendum.

I support the state legislation because it offers a chance for true reform. It is not about me or anyone else currently in office. The goal is an improved system of governance that, long after we are all gone, consistently produces better results for the people of Milwaukee County.

The current lack of role clarity, through no fault of anyone currently in office, catalyzes an unproductive environment. AB 85/SB 95 clarifies the legislatures' intent, and seeks to ultimately foster better decision-making and long-term thinking.

Some opponents of this reform have tried to say that the legislature shouldn't be acting on a County issue. These contentions misconstrue the role of County government. As an administrative arm of the State of Wisconsin, our role is largely to provide state and federally-mandated services. The State has the ability and authority to ensure that mandated services are provided in the most efficient manner possible.

Some on the Board have tried to say this change will undermine the checks and balances of government. As someone who has fought tirelessly for decades for human rights and civil rights, I would not support something if it compromised: meaningful checks on my role; the Board's proper oversight; or the voters' power to hold their representatives, including me, accountable. The voters and the state will continue to hold all of us accountable and the Board will retain its rightful oversight and policy setting role. Under the bill, the Board will still amend and approve the budget, the Board will still set policy that must be followed, and the Board will still actively approve medium and large sized contracts.

What the County needs is clarity so that we can become a high-performing organization that makes our community and our State proud.

I ask the Board to support this veto.