



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
Milwaukee County
CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

May 8, 2018

Dear Commission on Aging Advocacy Committee,

Thank you for your continued advocacy to help make Milwaukee County strong. Milwaukee County's senior centers provide an important service to the community and I am committed to making sure seniors continue to have access to such services.

I, like you, am concerned about the funding constraints that Milwaukee County faces. That is why in my last two Proposed Budgets I introduced an additional revenue source in the vehicle registration fee. While I know you advocated against that revenue increase, I hope we can work together in the future to look for ways to fund critical services to seniors and others.

As a group tasked with advocating for seniors in Milwaukee County, you have an important responsibility and I want to thank you for your commitment. I would also like to let you know that you have a great partner in Holly Davis. Every day I see her tirelessly advocating on issues important to seniors.

It is important to note that while staffing to the senior centers was impacted, specialized programming (piano lessons, Tai Chi, sewing classes, Silver Steppers) has not been impacted, and continues as it always has. This is possible due to strong volunteerism within the senior center programming structure as well as vendor staff working hard to absorb additional responsibilities.

Holly has been in close communication with Interfaith/Unison to make sure that they continue to provide the same level of service to the community. On multiple occasions, the staff of Unison/Interfaith has shared with the Department that all evidence points to the fact that services have not only not been impacted negatively, but some programming has in fact been added. And although this has nothing to do with the county budget, I was also glad to hear that Interfaith/Unison recently worked out an arrangement to continue its day trips for seniors.

Please be assured that the Department is closely monitoring the impact of the senior center funding reductions and is working in partnership with Interfaith/Unison.

Unfortunately, with declining funds to pay for critical services and without a groundswell of advocacy to raise new revenue, this problem will not go away – it will get worse. With every year, expenses grow and our ability to cover the cost does not. Future cuts will be unavoidable unless advocates – like you – support the County in raising new revenues. I ask for your help and partnership in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Abele', with a stylized, flowing script.

Chris Abele, County Executive