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DATE: January 22, 2019
TO: Sup. Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Steve Cady, Director of Research and Policy, Office of the Comptroller
SUBJECT: Fair Deal for Milwaukee County Workgroup – Adopted Resolution

As you recall, you and County Executive Abele jointly sponsored File No. 18-751, adopted October 29, 2018, that created The Fair Deal for Milwaukee County Workgroup (“Workgroup”). The objectives of the Workgroup were to identify viable solutions for Milwaukee County and local governments to work in partnership with the state to deliver critical public services and programs.

The Workgroup was composed of seventeen members across a diverse spectrum representing government, business, labor, philanthropy, civic, and community interests. The Workgroup met four times (December 20, 2018, January 3, 10, and 17, 2019) to learn about Milwaukee County programs and finances and develop a set of recommendations for the Committee on Intergovernmental Relations to consider as a platform for legislative changes.

These recommendations include:

- An opportunity to provide county government with additional options for local control over their own financial destiny, with new, additional revenue and a reduction in the reliance on property taxes, through enabling legislation and a binding county-wide referendum.
- Increased, fair, contributions from the State of Wisconsin toward the provision of current and new state-mandated services provided by local governments.
 - State Shared Revenue payments and other state aids should, at a minimum, match the rate of inflation required to provide cost-effective public programs and services.
- Full reimbursement of the tax levy costs incurred by the Milwaukee County Office of the Sheriff to provide expressway patrol services. Milwaukee County is the only county mandated by the state to patrol the expressways that are vital arteries in the State’s economic engine.
- An equal split of Circuit Court and Register of Deed fees collected by the County and, currently, disproportionately remitted to the State.

- Acceptance of federal funds to expand Medicaid coverage for 80,000 Wisconsin residents, help reduce local government health care costs, and provide \$190 million per year of additional revenue to the State.
- Ensure that 2017 Wisconsin Act 185 (relating to juvenile correctional facilities, youth aids, etc.) provides adequate funding by the State to avoid a funding gap for counties operating said facilities.
- Rejection of any reduction or offset for existing funding in the above recommendations below the amounts received in the 2019 Adopted Budget or future budgets.

The Workgroup made two further recommendations related to the process to achieve these legislative changes:

- That legislative and lobbying activity by the Wisconsin Counties Association, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, and any other groups which embody the criteria set forth be fully supported by Milwaukee County during review and adoption of the Wisconsin 2019-2021 biennial budget bill.
- That a joint meeting to discuss the contents of this resolution and “next steps” shall be convened by the Chairpersons to include Workgroup members, Milwaukee County State Legislative members, and other interested local government officials.

As support staff to the Fair Deal for Milwaukee County Workgroup, I am pleased to furnish to the County Board of Supervisors the resolution unanimously adopted by the Workgroup for review and approval by policymakers. A copy of the adopted resolution and related fiscal note is hereto attached to this file.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Cady

Stephen J. Cady
Director of Research and Policy
Office of the Comptroller

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