By Supervisor Nicholson File No. 21-545

**A RESOLUTION**

In support of State Legislative changes to require that State mandates be fully funded

WHEREAS, Wisconsin counties are mandated to administer services on behalf of the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, some services mandated by the State of Wisconsin include the operation of correctional facilities, highway maintenance, emergency management, and court operations; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin often does not fully fund these mandated services, causing the local taxpayers to incur the remainder of the cost; and

WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Office of the Sheriff, for example, is the only county sheriff mandated to provide its own expressway patrol services, receiving only partial funding from the State of Wisconsin in the form of expressway policing aids, while the State Highway Patrol services the rest of the Wisconsin expressways; and

WHEREAS, when counties are forced to budget for state mandated services, it redirects funding away from local services; and

WHEREAS, File No. 18-427 noted a study from the Wisconsin Policy Forum which found the obsolete 1929 Safety Building (courthouse) would cost beyond the County’s ability to finance without acquiring unsustainable debt because the Wisconsin Policy Forum compared the cost of new courthouses in other populous counties finding new courthouses costing $100 million to $500 million (File No. 18-427);

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County’s established a self-imposed debt limit, to maintain a fiscally responsible debt level (File No. 03-263), which is only $46.3 million in 2021 (File No. 20-733), and in addition to State mandates, Milwaukee County has a backlog of capital projects for quality of life services its residents expect, such as for parks projects; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County adopted File No. 05-86 on February 3, 2005, placing two questions on county-wide referendums relating to state versus county funding of State-mandated services within Combined Court Related Operations and the Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, more than 85% of voters supported state funding for state mandated services, rather than the use of county property taxes; and

WHEREAS, 69 of the 72 counties throughout the state placed similar questions on their spring 2005 ballots, receiving similar responses; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County supports the State of Wisconsin fully funding all State mandated services; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, Milwaukee County hereby supports the provision that Wisconsin law be amended to require that State mandates on counties be fully funded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Office of Government Affairs staff are authorized and directed to provide this resolution to the Wisconsin Counties Association for consideration in their 2021 Legislative Platform.