

Milwaukee County Executive Abele: Statement on 2018 County Budget

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MILWAUKEE – Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele today announced that he will not issue any vetoes to the budget that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors passed this afternoon on a 15-3 vote. The county executive also announced that he will not sign the budget, citing his profound concern about the \$15 million in service cuts to transit, public safety, parks, and social services demanded by Board Chairman Theo Lipscomb and approved by a significant majority of the County Board.

County Executive Abele released the following statement:

“As an executive I am required by law to implement the budget that is approved by the County Board of Supervisors even if I disagree with the policy direction they have chosen.

“With a vote of 15-3, clearly supervisors believe that \$15 million in deep cuts to transit, public safety, parks, and social services are what is best for the future of Milwaukee County. While this is not the sustainable budget I proposed, and I remain profoundly concerned about the cuts the Board has approved, I respect the County Board’s policy authority and will not fight their policy decision.

“However, I will not endorse the County Board’s service cuts and am therefore returning the budget to the County Board unsigned. I did not make this decision

lightly. There are many wonderful initiatives in this budget that I proposed and the Board has accepted: \$1 million in new funding to help address the opioid epidemic; \$1 million towards our efforts to reduce homelessness; investments in reforming our youth justice system; and a new source of revenue for our Parks.

“But overall, the County Board’s budget does not improve the County’s long-term fiscal outlook. Instead, it relies on short-sighted, one-time decisions that will only make for more difficult budgets in the future and takes the first step towards a government that provides fewer services for residents.

“I will do everything in my power to minimize the damage the County Board’s budget will inflict, but ultimately my administration is left with no choice but to implement \$15 million in service cuts to public safety, social services, transit, and parks that were demanded by Chairman Lipscomb’s amendment and supported by a majority of the County Board. We will also communicate with members of the community about the consequences of these cuts as part of a broader public conversation on the future of Milwaukee County. The services that will be cut as a result of the Board’s actions are not luxuries, they are a necessity for thousands of people, and I want to ensure those who are impacted are as prepared as possible.”

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