

Milwaukee County: County Executive David Crowley, Chairwoman Nicholson statement on local revenue reform passage

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Today, after years of advocacy by Milwaukee County and the Move Forward MKE coalition, both chambers of the Wisconsin State Legislature passed bipartisan legislation to reform the state's local revenue-sharing structure for the first time in over two decades. The legislation allows Milwaukee County to raise additional revenues to address its unique financial challenges.

In response to the historic vote, County Executive David Crowley and Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson issued the following statement:

“Thank you once again to Governor Tony Evers, Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu, and Assembly Speaker Robin Vos for coming to the table and producing bipartisan legislation that helps Milwaukee County address its unique financial challenges. An additional thank you goes out to Senator LaTonya Johnson, Rep. Deb Andraca, Rep. Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, and Rep. Kalan Haywood for taking a difficult, but necessary, vote to avoid the financial ruin of one of the most vital economic engines in Wisconsin.

“Milwaukee County has unique financial difficulties that other communities across the state don't have in terms of scale, cost, or impact across Wisconsin. We are grateful for the Governor and leadership in both the Senate and Assembly for learning about those challenges, understanding the devastating impact they would have on our residents, and working diligently with Milwaukee County to identify tools to address them. We are equally grateful for the help of Milwaukee-area

legislators in the Senate and Assembly for helping educate their colleagues on the financial crisis and the ripple effect it would have on local economies across the state.

“Bipartisan legislation often means that not everyone will get everything on their wish list. While our desire for autonomy remains steadfast, it is vital that Milwaukee County, as an arm of the state, acknowledges the fiscal realities that we must confront. Reaching a fiscal cliff is undoubtedly the single biggest threat to improving quality of life for residents and setting up our region for long-term success. There is too much at stake for Milwaukee County, and our entire state, to not take advantage of the opportunity ahead of us to avoid major service cuts and staff reductions across the board.

“The looming threat puts at risk critical services addressing acute community needs like housing assistance, disability services, youth & family services, public transportation, veterans’ services, and park safety. Reaching a fiscal cliff in a few short years would also mean Milwaukee County will only be able to make the bare-minimum investments into the entire public safety continuum which will delay justice, make communities less safe, and produce worse outcomes for all residents. This is a generational opportunity to secure our financial future and continue offering the services that keep residents healthy and safe.

“As deliberations on the sole issue of additional revenue turn to local legislative bodies, we look forward to productive conversations with county leaders and encouraging decision-making that aligns with community needs.”