

KEY POLICY ISSUES

2007-08 Legislative Session

Shared Revenue

The Shared Revenue appropriation should fulfill the State's commitment to communities across Wisconsin. In the last legislative session, the level remained constant. Milwaukee receives \$239.8 million in shared revenue and the related expenditure restraint program. An increase in the State's commitment is imperative.

General Transportation Aid and Other Transportation Assistance

Although the State's General Transportation fund has increased, the formula used to distribute the assistance has resulted in cuts to Milwaukee. Increasing the fund and addressing the formula will be pursued. "The Road to the Future" report of a special legislative committee recommends returning to 1988 levels of funding in General Transportation Aids and Connecting Highway Aid. In addition, while there is opportunity in the efforts to create a new funding mechanism through a Regional Transportation Authority, caution should be exercised to avoid city residents bearing the brunt without benefiting appropriately.

School Choice Funding Flaws

The School Choice Program was expanded without addressing two flaws that increase the cost of this program to Milwaukee property taxpayers. The first is the inadequacy of the state's support of the students in the Choice Program. The second is the effect of not having Choice students counted for purposes of determining equalized value per student which depresses the school aid that comes to Milwaukee Public Schools.

School of Public Health

Milwaukee is unfortunately known for the severity of many health issues that affect our citizens. A joint planning committee of Milwaukee Public Health department officials and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee staff will be reporting this fall to the board of regents on the efforts it will take to create a School of Public Health at UWM that will not only train future workers in the public health arena but will also support important research into the disparities that exist in many health indicators. The State should invest in the efforts that will be outlined in the report.

Maintaining Local Control

Many efforts have been made in Madison to erode the ability of local public leaders to make decisions that affect their constituents. It is imperative to maintain the integrity of our government system and assure the public that decisions remain at the level of government that is closest to them.

Eliminate Compensation for Discharged Employees

Police officers who are discharged from their jobs, and appeal that decision, have the benefit of continuing their compensation until the appeal process is concluded. Milwaukee is the only city with this unusual requirement that was created by state law and should be corrected.

Illegal Guns

The proliferation of illegal guns in our community has resulted in an immeasurable cost in human lives, health care services and public safety. We must close the loopholes in state law that allow for easy access to firearms by criminals.

Protecting Milwaukee's Property Tax Base

Property tax exemptions, either enacted by the legislature or created by court decision, reduce the City's total taxable property base which results in increasing taxes on other property. This shift is particularly unfair to homeowners.