



**Tom Barrett**  
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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June 28, 2018

To the Honorable, Common Council  
Of the City of Milwaukee

Honorable Members of the Common Council:

I am vetoing File #180185, which is a substitute resolution directing the Department of Administration - Intergovernmental Relations Division to seek introduction and passage of State legislation relating to the appointment of the executive secretary of the board of fire and police commissioners in a city of the 1st class. The Common Council is directing the City lobby for a change in State law to have the executive secretary of the Fire & Police Commission appointed by the Commissioners, rather than the Mayor.

This veto reflects the same concerns as my veto of File # 170634 in October of 2017. The resolution states in part:

*"Whereas, The Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission was created in 1885 to provide a public safety oversight body that was responsive to the community and that shielded police and fire services from political influences; and*

*Whereas, Prior to creation of the Fire and Police Commission, the fire and police chiefs were appointed by the Mayor, thereby making these positions likely candidates for political patronage..."*

Changing the appointing authority for the executive secretary does not remove politics from the appointments. It also moves the Commission further from voters and residents. Under current law, the Mayor appoints the Commissioners and executive secretary, who are confirmed by the Common Council. The proposal increases the politics around these appointments by making the executive secretary the appointee of appointed Commissioners, adding a layer between the voters and this important oversight body.

The members of the Fire and Police Commission are residents of our city from diverse backgrounds who perform a critical oversight function. They need to be fair and impartial to

conduct the Commission's quasi-judicial hearings. The Common Council is proposing with this resolution that the executive secretary be moved further from accountability to both the Mayor and Common Council.

The Council also puts the Commissioners and Commission staff in the position of searching for candidates. Adding an additional responsibility of recruiting and appointing an executive secretary will have an impact of the current work they do. It will increase the level of politics in appointing an executive secretary of the Fire and Police Commission.

I respectfully request you sustain my veto for the reasons stated above. Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tom Barrett  
Mayor