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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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March 6, 2006

Ald. Terry Witkowski  
Ald. Michael D'Amato  
414 286-2221  
Supv. Gerry Broderick  
414 278-4237

## City & County Officials Incensed At Mitchell International Power Grab

*Local Officials Decry Lack of Milwaukee Representation on Proposed Airport Commission, "Sheer Arrogance" of Some State Legislators in Pushing Proposal*

In a rare joint public rebuke, Common Council members and a member of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors together expressed outrage over the fast-tracking of a bill authored by state Rep. Jeff Stone (R-Greenfield) to pry control over Mitchell International Airport away from locally elected officials and transfer it to an appointed commission.

Ald. Terry L. Witkowski, whose 13<sup>th</sup> Aldermanic District includes Mitchell International, was joined by Ald. Michael S. D'Amato and County Supervisor Gerry Broderick in blasting Rep. Stone over the bill, which would assign control over the airport to an appointed commission that would include no Milwaukee representatives.

Ald. Witkowski said he was surprised when he first heard about the proposal. "Day in and day out I speak to my constituents who live near the airport and I have yet to hear a single complaint about the way in which the airport is run," said Ald. Witkowski. "I can tell you without hesitation that they want elected representatives to oversee this facility so that they can be held accountable if problems do arise."

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## **Airport Commission Proposal Ripped/ADD ONE**

Ald. D'Amato, chair of the Council's Judiciary & Legislation and Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development committees, called the bill authored by Rep. Stone "a power grab."

"The level of arrogance being displayed by some members of the state Legislature is alarming," said Ald. D'Amato. "They talk and talk about support for local control and then make significant changes in governance without hearing from a single member of the public."

The Common Council held a hearing on January 30 and unanimously passed a resolution sponsored by Ald. Witkowski opposing the transfer of power over the airport from elected officials to an appointed board. Also, 17 of 19 members of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors signed a letter opposing any change in governance.

Supervisor Gerry Broderick said the move by Rep. Stone and other state legislators "defies logic and common sense. Seventeen of 19 of my colleagues opposed this proposal to wrest control of Mitchell International from the County Board and place it in the hands of an unaccountable appointed board," said Supervisor Broderick.

"The effort of Rep. Stone and others to try and fix a 'problem' that doesn't exist – while so many other real problems go unaddressed in Madison – boggles the mind," Supervisor Broderick said.

While the proposed airport commission would not have the power to levy taxes, the wide-ranging proposal would give it power of eminent domain for possible airport expansion, Ald. Witkowski said.