



MEMORANDUM

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

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To: Ald. Joseph A. Dudzik
From: Richard Pfaff, Manager
Date: June 2, 2011
Subject: Changes in Size of Milwaukee Common Council; Survey of Council Size, Other Cities

Table 1 on page 2 indicates the changes in the number of members of the Milwaukee Common Council since 1940, and the number of constituents each member represented based on the population of the City at the time of the latest decennial census.

- From 1972 to 1980, members of the Common Council represented the highest number of constituents at 44,836.
- Based on the 2010 decennial census, members of the 2012-2016 term of the Common Council would represent either:

An average of 39,656 constituents, if the size of the Common Council remained at 15 members, or

An average of 45,756 constituents, if the size of the Common Council was reduced to 13 members.

- Under a 13-member Common Council, the average number of constituents represented by each member would increase by 6,101 persons (+15.4%) over a 15-member Common Council.

Table 2 on page 3 indicates the current number of members of common councils of other cities and the number of constituents each member represents based on the 2010 decennial census.

- The average number of council members for the municipalities included in the survey is 14 members, and the average number of constituents represented by each member is 71,047 constituents.
- The average number of members and constituents represented by each member reduces to 12 and 55,740, respectively, when excluding municipalities from the survey with populations greater than 1 million.

LRB128684

Table 1. Changes in Size of Common Councils since 1940, Number of Constituents Represented per Member.

Year	Decennial Census Population	Number of Council Members	Population per Council Member
1940	587,472	27	21,758
1950	637,392	27	23,607
1956		20	31,870
1960	741,324	20	37,066
1964		19	39,017
1970	717,372	19	37,756
1972		16	44,836
1980	636,212	16	39,763
1990	628,088	16	39,256
1992		17	36,946
2000	596,974	17	35,116
2004		15	39,798
2010	594,833	15	39,656
2012*		13	45,756

Source: Legislative Reference Bureau Library Services research.

*Indicates proposed reduction in size of Common Council under CCFN 110063.

Table 2. Size of Common Councils and Number of Persons represented per Member, Other Cities.

City	Population, 2010	Current Council Size	Population Per Council Member
Nashville	601,222	41	14,664
Cleveland	396,815	19	20,885
Louisville	597,337	26	22,975
Toledo	287,208	12	23,934
Buffalo	261,310	9	29,034
Minneapolis	382,578	13	29,429
Newark	277,140	9	30,793
Cincinnati	296,943	9	32,994
Pittsburgh	305,704	9	33,967
Kansas City	459,787	13	35,368
Honolulu	337,256	9	37,473
Milwaukee	594,833	15	39,656
Baltimore	620,961	14	44,354
Denver	600,158	13	46,166
Washington, DC	601,723	13	46,286
Boston	617,594	13	47,507
Oakland	390,724	8	48,841
New Orleans	343,829	7	49,118
Chicago	2,695,598	50	53,912
Sacramento	466,488	8	58,311
Charlotte	731,424	11	66,493
Seattle	608,660	9	67,629
Fresno	494,665	7	70,666
Oklahoma City	579,999	8	72,500
Detroit	713,777	9	79,309
Las Vegas	583,756	7	83,394
Philadelphia	1,526,006	17	89,765
San Jose	945,942	10	94,594
Columbus	787,033	7	112,433
Austin	790,390	6	131,732
Portland	583,776	4	145,944
Houston	2,099,451	14	149,961
New York	8,175,133	51	160,297
San Diego	1,307,402	8	163,425
Los Angeles	3,792,621	15	252,841

Source: Legislative Reference Bureau research.