



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

February 12, 2014

To the Honorable, the Common Council
of the City of Milwaukee

Honorable Members of the Common Council:

I have vetoed File number 131413, a substitute resolution appropriating up to \$5,000 from the Economic Development Committee Fund to the Retail Christian Network [RCN] for participation in the 2014 Retail Christian Network Breakfast Gathering at the International Council of Shopping Centers annual convention.

In a letter dated January 14, 2014, and addressed to Friends of the RCN, RCN's Director, Mr. David Atchison states the following:

“As we have done since 1997, we will continue to invite guests to join us free of charge. This means we must reach out to more companies, organizations and individuals for financial support. God continues to work mightily through our events, our local fellowships, our weekly devotionals and new discipleship resources. That expansion drives our need for more sponsors to underwrite the national breakfast as well as our year-round ministry budget.”

RCN is an extension of Higher Call Ministries based in Franklin, Tennessee.

I have two concerns with the resolution.

First, I am not convinced that there is a public purpose associated with the expenditure of City of Milwaukee funds for the sponsorship of the RCN's Las Vegas breakfast, for the financing of the RCN's year round ministry or for supporting RNC's parent organization based in Franklin, Tennessee.

Second, I am concerned that the \$5,000 appropriation could be viewed as a First Amendment violation in as much as Mr. Atchison's letter specifically states the need for sponsors to “underwrite our year-round ministry budget.”