

Good afternoon,

My name is Gerard Randall. I'm a resident and homeowner of Milwaukee's Brewer's Hill neighborhood since 1992.

The City of Milwaukee will face "operationally devastating" cuts if the Milwaukee Common Council votes against increasing the sales tax by 2% in the coming weeks. "Devastating," in this case, means a budget gap of \$156 million beginning in 2024, a gap that will only widen, swallowing up jobs and services along the way. The County will face similar fiscal ruin if the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors votes against raising the County sales tax by 0.4%. If both increases are implemented, the sales tax – the burden of which is shared by residents *and* the millions of visitors that come to Milwaukee each year -- will go from 5.5% to 7.9%.

For the City, without revenue generated by this increase, the cuts will be especially damaging to departments like Fire, Police, and the Milwaukee Public Library system, and could result in the elimination of nearly 900 staff members in those three departments alone. For the County, the situation is even more alarming. Cuts of this magnitude could mean an eventual reduction of a third of its entire workforce, and Milwaukee County Transit System alone could face cuts that affect nearly half of its routes.

These cuts will mean a tangible reduction in resources that support Milwaukee's most vulnerable. And we must not let them happen.

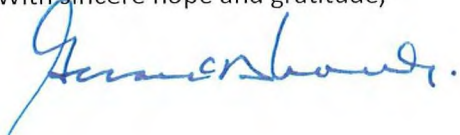
Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson, Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley, Milwaukee Common Council President Jose Perez and Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors Chair Marcellia Nicholson have spent countless hours over the last two years working across the aisle with the Republican-held state legislature as well as with Governor Tony Evers to bring this historic opportunity to fruition. They have been able to reach a compromise that only few thought possible just a few years ago. But through their dedication and determination, they've brought this solution to the finish line – and it's a solution Milwaukee is in no position to pass up.

In the last 15 years, major investments have been made not only downtown but, in the neighborhoods where we raise our families. With new retail, restaurants, and service providers popping up nearly every month, the neighborhoods that make up Bronzeville are a recent testament to this. But that progress will slow to a trickle if our municipal government can't support itself – much less other projects – and is left to fall off the fiscal cliff.

There is more work to be done in this process, but after years of politics our local leaders have reached an actionable step forward in making government work for the people it serves and securing the future of local government in Milwaukee and the economic future of our entire region. We should support them, the work they've already done, and their vision for making Milwaukee thrive.

Today, you can be a part of this forward momentum by your vote to raise the sales tax. It is all but certain that we will not get another opportunity to solve our current fiscal crisis anytime soon, and we can't afford to wait.

With sincere hope and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerard Randall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "G".