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Title: Resolution expressing Common Council support for the principle of shared sacrifice in addressing the State of Wisconsin’s budget shortfall.

Sponsors: ALD. MURPHY, ALD. KOVAC, ALD. COGGS, ALD. BAUMAN

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101373
ORIGINAL

ALDS. MURPHY, KOVAC, COGGS, AND BAUMAN
Resolution expressing Common Council support for the principle of shared sacrifice in addressing the State of Wisconsin’s budget shortfall.

This resolution expresses the Common Council’s support for the principle of shared sacrifice in addressing the State of Wisconsin’s budget shortfall and calls upon Governor Scott Walker to demand the same health and pension cost-sharing from all public employees.

Whereas, The notion of shared sacrifice has been a mantra Governor Scott Walker has used in his speeches and interviews concerning the State of Wisconsin’s budget adjustment bill; and

Whereas, In its current form, the state budget adjustment bill exempts police and fire unions from collective bargaining restrictions imposed on other unions; and

Whereas, The budget adjustment legislation proposed by Governor Walker would remove the ability of public employee unions, except for police and fire unions, to bargain over pensions and health insurance and would limit those unions to negotiate only on base wages; and

Whereas, The City of Milwaukee opposes the budget adjustment bill’s language that takes away the ability of public employee unions to bargain collectively; and

Whereas, The City does support driving a hard bargain at the negotiating table, and ensuring that contracts with unions protect its taxpayers and offer working environments that are safe, fair and productive; and

Whereas, The City opposes the governor’s efforts to restrict the fundamental practice of workers to organize and bargain collectively; and

Whereas, Republican governors in other states have not provided any exemption to their police and fire unions from fiscal sacrifices; and

Whereas, The governor's exemption for police and fire union members would have a disproportionate negative impact, as nearly two-thirds of the City's pension and post-retirement health care liabilities are devoted to police and fire services; and

Whereas, Without the shared sacrifice of police officers and firefighters, other City services, such as library, public health and disease prevention, snowplowing, pothole repair and garbage collection, would bear a disproportionate share of the City's fiscal burden, leading to deep cuts in services and personnel; and

Whereas, The exemption of police and fire members would also have a significant adverse impact on the continuing costs of retiree health care as the average post-retirement health care liability - the amount taxpayers now pay for each protective service union member before the member becomes eligible for Medicare - is \$136,469 for a fire member and \$123,272 for a police member versus \$50,214 for a non-protective union member or for a general City employee; and

Whereas, The governor's rationale for exempting police and fire unions from collective bargaining restrictions -- that public safety could be compromised if members of the protective services decided to walk off their jobs -- is not convincing; and

Whereas, The City has full confidence in the professionalism of police officers and firefighters and their commitment to the public safety and welfare of the community; and

Whereas, Since police officers can retire as early as 43 and firefighters at age 49, the post-retirement health care costs for these members are more than double the amount for other City employee groups; and

Whereas, The City could save \$14.4 in pension contributions and \$4.7 million in health care costs if police officers and firefighters had to make the same sacrifices as other public workers; and

Whereas, The budget adjustment bill pits general City employees against fire and police unions, and would result in fewer savings for City taxpayers and a greater cost-reduction burden falling on other City employees and the services they provide; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Common Council supports the principle of shared sacrifice in addressing the State of Wisconsin's budget shortfall and calls upon Governor Scott Walker to demand the same health and pension cost-sharing from all public employee unions.

LRB 125892-1
Teodros W. Medhin/sd/lp
2/28/2011