

# Who needs Milwaukee County government?



I DO



WE DO



WE DO



I DO



WE DO



WE DO

## AGING

- Elder Abuse Helpline
- Home Delivered Meals
- Transportation Cards
- Senior Centers

## AIRPORT

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- Day Treatment
- Crisis Services
- Family Intervention and Support
- Inpatient — Acute Child and Adult

## CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

## CIVIL DEFENSE

## COURT SYSTEM

- Children's Court
- Civil Courts
- Criminal Courts

## DISABILITY SERVICES

## DISTRICT ATTORNEY

- Consumer Fraud
- Domestic Violence
- Drug Unit
- Sensitive Crimes
- Elderly Victims Services
- White Collar Crime

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Day Care Enforcement
- Economic Support
- Energy Assistance

## HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS

## HOUSING

- Home Repair Loans
- Rent Assistance

## JUDGES

## JURY SERVICE

## MEDICAL EXAMINER

## PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

- Domes
- Botanical Gardens
- McKinley Marina
- Milwaukee Public Museum
- Swimming Pools
- Trails and Bikepaths

## REGISTER OF DEEDS

- Birth, Death and Marriage Records
- Real Estate Records

## SHERIFF

- Milwaukee County Jail
- Airport Security
- Criminal Investigation
- Evictions
- Mental Commitment
- Highway and Park Patrol

## TRANSIT SYSTEM

- Bus System
- Transport for Elderly and Disabled

## UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EXTENSION

## VETERANS SERVICES

## ZOO

**We all do.**

# WHAT'S THE **problem?**

## County leaders are proposing cuts in important programs:

- end four county bus routes
- raise bus fares \$100 a year for regular riders
- slash maintenance of parks, golf courses, the Domes and other recreation areas
- close a downtown jail
- wipe out indoor maintenance at the courthouse and county grounds
- outsource hundreds of county jobs to the private sector
- close nearly all county pools in 2007 and rebuild a small number... down the road

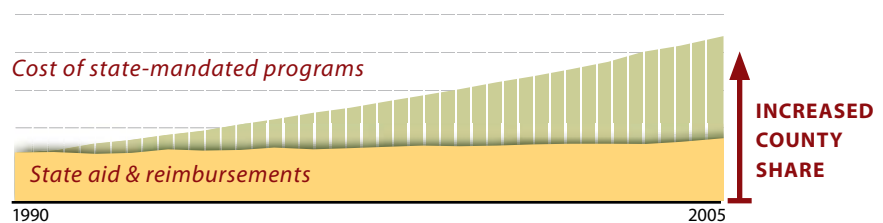
*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (July 6, 2006)*



*The Milwaukee buses provide more than 150,000 passenger trips daily. Over half of these passengers travel to work by bus. Many say using the buses has helped them find, keep or advance in their jobs.*

**Milwaukee County services are on the chopping block.** Almost all Wisconsin counties are facing a similar crisis because state aid is inadequate. The state has authority to collect income — property and sales tax — and distribute the money to cities and counties. But State funding aid to communities has dropped over the past ten years.

The state government requires counties to provide complicated and expensive services — the courts system, juvenile justice, services for the disabled. But state aid has been frozen at the same level for many years while the cost of doing these services has gone up.



## Revenue caps

The state legislature has capped local taxes so the County can't raise new money even though crucial programs and services are in danger.

## What about the pension scandal and high benefits?

In 2000-2001, the County Board approved a plan that improved pension benefits for employees. The pension improvements allowed employees to take some of their pension money out in a lump sum, which lowered their monthly pension payments over their lifetime. It also increased pension amounts for employees hired after 1982 and provided for a bonus for employees hired before 1982.

The County Board was told by their consultants that the lump sum would not increase the cost of the pension program. In fact, the new plan did increase the cost to the pension fund, which added to the County's budget problems. For example, between 2001 and 2006, 898 retirees received payouts totaling \$118 million.

In the wake of this scandal, the County has taken corrective action. The consultants are being sued and County unions have agreed to reduced benefits. Since 1994 new employees have not been eligible for County-paid health insurance when they retire. And the wave of costly payouts has dwindled. Current retirees from all years (before and after the 2001 change) receive a median pension of \$15,420 after an average of 26 years of service.

# HOW ABOUT **privatization?**



## **Milwaukee has *tried* privatization.**

- In 1998, the State took over foster care and privatized most services. The new system has 50% annual staff turnover, half as many licensed foster homes, a 35% drop in adoptions and the highest number of children abused in foster care. It also costs more than twice as much to run.
- Milwaukee gave County Stadium to the Brewers to save \$4 million dollars a year in payments. In 1996, a five county tax was levied by the state to cover the cost of a new stadium. Milwaukee County taxpayers pay approximately \$12 million each year in sales tax for the stadium. The cost of the stadium has risen from the original estimate of \$250 million to more than \$400 million and there is no defined end date for the sales tax.
- In 1998, Milwaukee sewage treatment was contracted to a private company — United Water. To save money, United cut staff and electrical usage, causing untreated sewage to be dumped. A state lawsuit was filed in 2005 stating the dumping of over 2 billion gallons of raw and combined sewage in May of 2004 violated state public nuisance laws and must be curbed. *(Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, November 7, 2005)*
- Privatized contracts for W-2 led to high profits for agencies, fiscal mismanagement as well as the loss of services and support for thousands of impoverished families.
- Privatized management of the Public Museum failed to monitor or resolve a huge financial crisis in 2005.
- Lake Park Pavilion was once a beautiful and popular public resource. Now it is a very expensive restaurant many families cannot afford.

## ***Privatization hasn't worked.***

**Some county leaders are not trying to solve the funding shortfall. They are using the crisis as an opportunity to:**

- close down programs
- sell parks and the public museum
- transfer services to profit making businesses and
- gradually eliminate county government completely

Some county leaders believe that it would be better to slash government. They think that if we turn public programs over to private businesses, they will do a better job.



THERE IS A BETTER WAY...



## Preserve our community heritage

Generations of Milwaukeeans built public structures to make our lives more secure, healthy and successful. They established transportation and legal systems, social services, natural green spaces, cultural resources and a governing process so everyone could achieve success. It is our turn now to protect these structures for the future. We can't allow shortsighted politicians to push us backwards. Tim Sheehy, President of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, stated, "You can't cut your way to prosperity." (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, May 26, 2006)

The **Alliance to Protect the Public Good** is a network of organizations, congregations, labor unions and individuals working to find short-term protection from budget cuts in 2007 and long-term fiscal stability through reforms in state aid.

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

1. Contact groups you are involved in to endorse the principles.
2. Sign up to be part of the budget fight between September and November.
3. Call your County Supervisor and tell him or her to protect our community services. Call the main number, tell them your address and they will give you the supervisor's name and number. **Phone: 414-278-4222.**

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SIGN ON TO THE CAMPAIGN, CONTACT

For more information or to sign on to the campaign, contact the Alliance to Protect the Public Good, c/o Institute for Wisconsin's Future (IWF) at 414-384-9094 or Citizen Action Milwaukee at 414-476-4550 Ext 217.

### Our principles:

#### Preserve County services

- **Public Safety:** Courts and Judges, District Attorney, Sheriff
- **People in Need:** Elderly, Children, Families in Crisis
- **Transportation:** Transit System, Airport
- **Recreation:** Parks and Lakefront, Museums, Zoo
- **Records:** Deeds, Licenses, Vital Statistics

#### Protect County values

- Parklands and waterways are a gift from the past — maintain these treasures for the future.
- Manage the public's business for the common good and not for profit.
- Honor the commitments made to employees who dedicated their work life to the County.

#### Conserve County resources

- Establish a careful plan to reduce debt.
- Make efficient use of human, physical, and property resources.
- Ensure that leadership is dedicated to quality public services over the long-term.