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Ald. Ashanti Hamilton  
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## Budget Provisions Would Negate City Benefits Ordinance

*Changes are part of state budget to be signed by Governor on Sunday*

An ordinance that created wage standards and hiring requirements on city projects would be nullified by provisions included in the 2011-2013 state budget that is set to be signed into law by Governor Walker on Sunday, according to **Alderman Ashanti Hamilton**.

In the state budget, Section 1727me “Prohibits local governments from administering current ordinances with prevailing wage provisions.”

The city’s benefits ordinance (also referred to as the “MORE” Ordinance), was approved by the Common Council in 2009, seeking to help city residents and workers by establishing wage standards, apprenticeship training opportunities, and city resident hiring requirements for commercial developments receiving at least \$1 million in financial assistance from the City of Milwaukee.

Alderman Hamilton, primary sponsor of the MORE Ordinance, said the city has had its own prevailing wage ordinance for decades and has successfully administered the program, thereby relieving the state of needing additional resources to enforce its own program. “Very simply, including prevailing wages on city contracts has also assisted with ensuring that middle class families have a greater opportunity to earn solid, family supporting wages – something desperately needed in the fourth poorest big city in the U.S.,” he said.

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## **Budget Slip-In /ADD ONE**

Ending the MORE Ordinance would take away valuable apprenticeship training and job opportunities for residents of Milwaukee's poorest neighborhoods, Alderman Hamilton said.

"We have black male unemployment rates in Milwaukee approaching 50%, yet some in the Legislature and the Governor want to strip away rays of hope for a better future. Nullifying the MORE Ordinance is not only taking away home rule and local control, quite frankly I think it's shameful and morally reprehensible," Alderman Hamilton said.

**Mayor Tom Barrett** sent a letter to the Governor last week, urging him to use a line-item veto on the provision. "Given the high unemployment rates among various groups in our city, I am strongly opposed to the state eliminating our ability to reverse this trend," he said. "This is another example of the Republican majority trampling on local government and our efforts to put Milwaukee to work."

**Alderman Willie C. Wade** said the budget provisions will make it more difficult or even in violation of state law for the city to implement any of the recommendations of the "disparity study" that found that minority- and women-owned businesses have been underutilized and are at a disadvantage in winning city contracts.

"This is disheartening and will, I fear, only serve to perpetuate the disparity that exists for women and minority business owners who have been systematically shut out of city contracts and projects," Alderman Wade said.

**A second provision** (Section 1727e. 66.0901 (1m)) would severely impact the city's ability to award bids to locally owned businesses or ones owned by women and/or minorities. Part of that section reads: "Except when necessary to secure federal aid, a political subdivision may not use a bidding method that gives preference based on the geographic location of the bidder or that uses criteria other than the lowest responsible bidder in awarding a contract."

**Wendy Baumann** of the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corp. (WWBIC) said the budget provisions will nullify the city's ability to provide emerging businesses access to city contracting opportunities. "Last year (2010), WWBIC provided small business loans and quality business education to hundreds of Milwaukee area entrepreneurs and business owners – having access to contracting opportunities is key," Ms. Baumann said.

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## **Budget Slip-In /ADD TWO**

“The city’s contracting policies have opened the door of opportunity for many local businesses and have provided jobs for local residents. It is critical that they be safeguarded,” she said.

**Sheila D. Cochran**, secretary-treasurer and chief operating officer of the Milwaukee County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, said the provisions show the administration’s “appalling disregard for local control.” “It is appalling that an administration that claims Wisconsin is ‘open for business’ ignores, invalidates and suspends the largest city in the state from any notion of working with those programs that we have fought for to get our community included in local hiring,” Ms. Cochran said.

“In particular the Residents Preference Program, so stated, is rendered null and void. We fought hard to expand it and this administration has proven again and again it cares nothing for Milwaukee,” she said.

Co-sponsors of the MORE Ordinance were Alderman Nik Kovac, Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Alderman Willie C. Wade, Alderman Joe Davis, Sr. and Alderman Bob Bauman.

Supporters of the proposal, including labor unions, said the MORE Ordinance would help ensure family-supporting wages for people hired to work on building commercial developments, hotels, stores and other businesses.