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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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**March 1, 2011**

**Ald. Michael Murphy**  
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## Common Council's "Shared Sacrifice" File on State Budget Passes 13-1-1

The Milwaukee Common Council voted 13 to 1 (with one absent) today in favor of a resolution supporting the principle of shared sacrifice in addressing the state's budget shortfall.

The measure, sponsored by Alderman Michael J. Murphy and Alderman Nik Kovac, calls upon Governor Scott Walker to demand the same health and pension cost-sharing from all public employees. File #101373 puts the Council on record in support of shared sacrifice and directly addresses the state budget repair bill's exemption of Milwaukee police officers and firefighters from collective bargaining restrictions and proposed increases in health insurance and pension contributions.

Alderman Murphy said the Council's 13-1-1 vote is a strong indication that the Council is in agreement that all public unions need to share in the budget repair bill's provisions. "It is simply unfair to exempt our police and fire unions from the budget repair bill's provisions," he said.

"By doing so you are pitting general city employees against firefighters and police officers, and you're shifting the negative impact squarely on other city departments and services that will bear the brunt of deep cuts in personnel and services," Alderman Murphy said.

The file approved today by the Council also opposes the budget adjustment bill's language that takes away the ability of public employee unions to bargain collectively. It states: "The City opposes the governor's efforts to restrict the fundamental practice of workers to organize and bargain collectively."

**-More-**

## **Council Adopts Budget File/ADD ONE**

Alderman Kovac said the city will be “handcuffed” in dealing with deep cuts in shared revenue because of the exemption of the police and fire unions. “Nearly two-thirds of the city’s pension and post-retirement health care liabilities are devoted to police and fire services, so we really have no room to maneuver because of the way the bill is written,” he said.

“If you are trying to save taxpayers’ money by reducing the benefits of public employees, why exempt those employees with the most expensive benefits – our police officers and firefighters?” Alderman Kovac said.

According to the city budget office, if police and fire union members were not exempt from the provisions of the budget repair bill, the city would save an additional \$14.4 million on the pension contribution this year and would see savings of an additional \$4.7 million on health insurance costs.

In approving the file today, the Council goes on record in disagreement with 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.

“The governor has so little faith in our men and women who wear badges that he just assumes they’ll walk off the job because of a labor disagreement,” Alderman Murphy said. “We’ve been able to successfully bargain with both unions for years, and we know well the commitment of our police officers and firefighters each and every day, and we know they would never shun their duty to the community.”

The exemption for police and firefighters in Wisconsin differs from several other states where legislation is being pursued by Republican administrations to restrict collective bargaining by public employee unions. In Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, and Colorado, police and firefighters are included in bills to eliminate or limit collective bargaining.