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FOR INFORMATION CALL

February 28, 2011

Bill Arnold
(414) 286-3285

Council's "Shared Sacrifice" File Addresses State Budget Repair Bill

The Milwaukee Common Council will vote tomorrow (Tuesday, March 1) on a measure urging Governor Scott Walker to demand the same health and pension cost-sharing from all public unions.

If the Council approves the resolution – file #101373 – it puts the body 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.

The resolution, sponsored by Alderman Michael J. Murphy and Alderman Nik Kovac, notes the 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."

But, it states: "The City of Milwaukee opposes the budget adjustment bill's language that takes away the ability of public employee unions to bargain collectively. The City opposes the governor's efforts to restrict the fundamental practice of workers to organize and bargain collectively."

It states: "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."

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Common Council/ADD ONE

The budget bill's exemptions for the city's three fire and police unions "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," it states.

The legislation states that the Council disagrees 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 file states: "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."

The file states: "The governor's exemption for our 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. 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."

According to the file, the average post retirement health care liability (the amount taxpayers now pay for each protective service union member before they become eligible for Medicare) for fire members is \$136,469 and \$123,272 for police members. It states that that same average post retirement health care liability for non-protective service union members and general city employees is \$50,214.

Because police members can retire as early as age 43, and fire members can retire as early as age 49, the post retirement health care liabilities for police and fire members are **more than double** the amount of other city employee groups, the file states.

The Council will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday in the third floor Council Chamber at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.