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*City of Milwaukee Common Council*

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## Governor Walker's budget proposals prompt fresh concerns for Milwaukee

### **Statement of Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr. February 21, 2013**

It was refreshing to hear, in his budget proposal to the state legislature last night, that Gov. Scott Walker does not plan additional cuts to shared revenue, transportation aids or municipal services, which are the largest, most crucial state aids the City of Milwaukee receives. Similar cuts have, in the past, posed challenges in balancing the city's budget.

It is, however, discouraging to hear Gov. Walker call for an end to residency laws that require municipal employees to live in the city, village or county where they work. Although we anticipated he might propose something of this sort, this is a policy that does not belong in his budget, and should be determined by local lawmakers.

Milwaukee's own residency rule, which as a matter of home rule has been on the books for 75 years, is held up as a model for how such requirements can benefit a municipality by shoring up property values and boosting the local economy. Coming in the midst of a serious foreclosure crisis in Milwaukee, Gov. Walker's proposal would do nothing but trigger a decline in employment and further distress property values in the city. Additionally, an exodus of municipal employees from the city would uproot the diverse culture we have cultivated for so long in this city. Nearly every official in the City of Milwaukee, including myself, opposes ending residency requirements.

While I support educational options for students, I am also disappointed that the proposed budget extends the school voucher program without correcting the funding flaw that Milwaukee taxpayers currently face. I also have concerns about the potentially detrimental effects expanding the voucher program could have on public schools.

But again, the most serious implications I see in Governor Walker's proposals are rooted in the statewide elimination of residency requirements.