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ALDERMAN, 7TH DISTRICT

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Troubling proposal seeks to harm cities that reduce funding for police

Statement of Alderman Khalif J. Rainey
August 27, 2020

State Sen. Van Wanggaard wants to keep Wisconsin police departments fully funded so badly that he is proposing to cut state shared revenue payments for communities that reduce their police budgets.

A proposed change to state law put forth by Sen. Wanggaard, a former cop, would require the Department of Administration (DOA) to reduce a municipality's aid payment if the municipality decreases the amount of its municipal budget dedicated to hiring, training, and retaining law enforcement officers from the amount the municipality dedicated for that purpose in the previous year. Specifically, DOA would be required to reduce the municipality's aid payment by the amount of the decrease in the municipality's budget dedicated to hiring, training, and retaining law enforcement officers. If DOA reduces a municipality's aid payment in this manner, the amount of the reduced aid payment remains as the amount of the municipality's aid payment in subsequent years.

Under current law, the state provides unrestricted aid payments, commonly referred to as "shared revenue," to counties and municipalities under the county and municipal aid program. Subject to certain exceptions, current law requires that county and municipal aid payments in 2013 and subsequent years be equal to the amount of the payment determined for each county or municipality in 2012. [s. 79.035, Stats.]

Sen. Wanggaard's bill requires that the amount of all reductions be distributed among the municipalities not subject to reduction, in proportion to each municipality's share under the county and municipal aid program (interestingly, the proposal's reduction mechanism does NOT apply to a municipality that transfers responsibility for providing law enforcement to another local unit of government or that enters into a cooperative agreement to share law enforcement responsibilities with another local unit of government).

So in the midst of wide-scale local, state, national and global public conversations about transforming how cities and communities provide police services, and with demands for action against police brutality and for better police accountability and transparency, Sen. Wanggaard wants to trample local control and smack any WI municipality that decides on its own to reduce police funding!

That's truly special. As in, this is his idea of "special" treatment during a pandemic.

Time for local leaders across the state to unify and tell Sen. Wanggaard his proposal is ready for storage in the evidence room (as in evidence of a crappy and harmful idea).

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