



CITY OF MILWAUKEE YOUTH COUNCIL

18 August 2011

Chris Abele
Milwaukee County Executive
901 N. 9th St., Rm. 306
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear County Executive Abele:

My name is Zach Komes and I am president of the City of Milwaukee Youth Council. I am a senior at Rufus King High School and had the opportunity to meet you when I organized a "Teen Voter Forum" at our school during your campaign.

I am writing on behalf of the Youth Council to urge you to prevent fare increases of the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) from affecting the youth population in Milwaukee County. As you know, high school students in the county are heavily reliant on the transit system and are thus more likely to be affected by a fare increase.

The County has undergone numerous fare increases in the past 10 years. The economic downturn, in addition to a competitive job market, the need for a high-skilled workforce and program cuts to Mayor Barrett's summer jobs initiative, has led to decreased incomes of young people. According to the Employment Policies Institute which studies the U.S. job market, the national unemployment rate for teens who are seeking employment is 24%, which is an increase from the national average of 20% from 2008-2010. As you can understand, a fare increase on transit would have a drastic impact on youth ridership, especially those who use the bus to travel to school, work or for pleasure.

I am proud to say that the Youth Council passed file number #1105 opposing the state budget cuts to MCTS at our July formal meeting. We understand that the County has to deal with these cuts to its budget, but it also has the responsibility to provide services for our city's most susceptible population.

Therefore, the Youth Council proposes that your office looks into proposing a special youth fare for those ages 12-18 years old in the event that there is a standard fare increase. We kindly advocate for a fare that stays at the current \$2.25 level, or a slight increase that is not as large as the general adult fare increase.

Please take into account how MCTS cuts will affect our County's younger population. We look forward to hearing your response and listening to ways that the County and the Milwaukee Youth Council can work together in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zachary Komes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Zachary Komes
President/Member (District 10)
City of Milwaukee Youth Council

Cc: Members of the Youth Council
Chairman Lee Holloway
Managing Director Lloyd Grant, Jr.

Enclosures: Youth Council Resolution Number 1105