

MISMANAGEMENT: STATE TAKEOVERS

Circuit Courts

Walker urged state takeover of circuit courts. Would give up equal amount of their shared revenue payments if the state would fully pay for circuit courts.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 11/7/2002]

Walker proposed draconian cuts to the county judicial system – elimination of 31 positions, forcing the county to close 1 of every 7 courts each day – in attempt to force the state to take over the circuit courts.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 10/2/2003]

Rather than fix Milwaukee County's financial problems, mismanagement issues, Walker proposes shifting county responsibilities to others.

- *One Walker idea would have state employees take over for nearly 300 Circuit Court support staff, who cost a total of about \$12 million a year in salary and fringe costs.*

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 4/29/2006]

Human Services

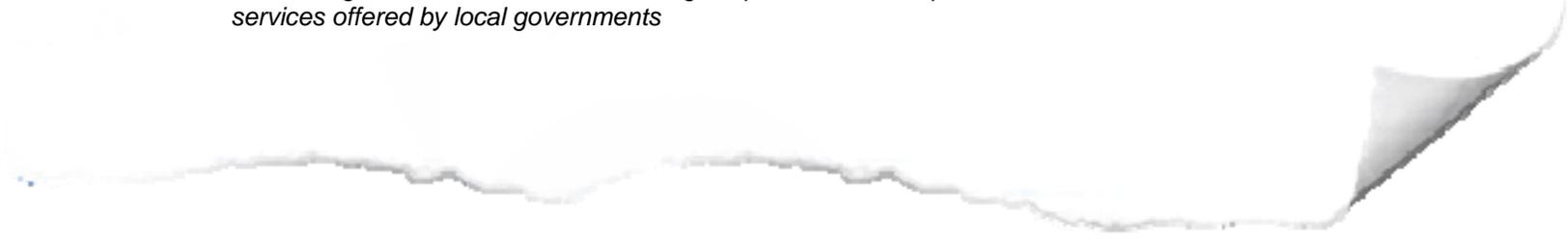
Rather than fix Milwaukee County's financial problems, mismanagement issues, Walker proposes shifting county responsibilities to others.

Another Walker proposal calls for substitution of state employees for nearly 250 county human services intake workers, who conduct interviews to determine eligibility for food stamps, Medicaid and the Wisconsin Works welfare reform program. They cost about \$8.3 million a year.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 4/29/2006]

County Finances

A prominent civic organization (Greater Milwaukee Committee) called for possible state takeover of the county government's finances if Walker didn't quickly take budget reduction steps to ease its financial crisis. Recommendations included:

- *Enacting long-overdue changes in the county's "fundamentally flawed" health insurance benefit plans for employees and retirees. Union support would be needed for some changes, estimated to save up to \$28 million annually.*
 - *Approving a 30-year borrowing plan to pay off the unfunded portion of the county's giant pension liability.*
 - *Turning to other governments to do many jobs now performed by county employees.*
 - *Eliminating what it calls the "astonishing" duplication of fire, police, facilities maintenance and other services offered by local governments*
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[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 9/11/2006]

Private Industry Council

Doyle stripped the Private Industry Council from county supervision and put it in Mayor Barrett's hands after Walker came under criticism for the council's lack of effectiveness and accountability. The Private Industry Council had been the designated recipient for \$14 million, 70% from federal work force investment funds. As county exec, Walker de-prioritized economic development. It was his belief that "the state and municipalities play larger roles than the county in shaping development."

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 10/3/2008]

- *Gov. Jim Doyle has notified the Private Industry Council that as of July 1 he intends to designate the city and Mayor Tom Barrett as the work force investment board for Milwaukee and the surrounding areas. Milwaukee County and its Private Industry Council board are the designated recipient now. The council receives about \$14 million, 70% of it federal work force investment funds.*

In February, Barrett asked to take over work force development, saying there needed to be more leadership and collaboration to deal with high city unemployment. He cited various studies that have criticized the system.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 3/22/2007]

- *Mayor Tom Barrett on Tuesday laid out his case for taking over millions of dollars in federal work-force development money from the county, saying new leadership and accountability is needed to deal with the city's joblessness.*

"I can't accept the status quo because this is too important to the city of Milwaukee to have the mayor take a passive role on jobs and work-force development," he told a meeting of the Council on Workforce Investment, which will make a recommendation to Gov. Jim Doyle on the switch. Barrett has said that taking over the work-force duties will give the issue more visibility and political accountability, something it now lacks.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 3/28/2007]

- *Gov. Jim Doyle designated the City of Milwaukee and Mayor Tom Barrett as the new authority for work force development, which will result in millions of dollars in federal job training money shifting to the city from the county-run Private Industry Council.*

"We must focus our efforts to ensure that we have high-skilled workers in Milwaukee and throughout the state that are trained to compete successfully for the jobs of tomorrow," Doyle says in the news release. The release says the move should improve accountability and effectiveness. In February, Barrett asked Doyle to designate him and the city as the work force development authority.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 4/5/2007]

- *The discussion started at the state Council on Workforce Investment, said state Rep. Josh Zepnick (D-Milwaukee), who was on the state council and worked at PIC from 1992-'94. "Work-force development works well in other parts of the state, but we were concerned with Milwaukee, the largest city," he said. Meetings were convened to talk about Milwaukee and its work-force development system.*

"To me, clearly it seems to be an accountability question," said Sheehy, who is on the PIC board. "In this case the mayor is saying, 'I want to be accountable for the performance of this jobs-training funding.' I don't see any other elected leader saying that."
[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 6/27/2007]

- *Randall was ousted from his \$154,000-a-year job as council head last June when Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett took over control of the agency, now called the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board.*

The move comes in the wake of last year's political shuffle of the primary local job development agency. Barrett took over the old Private Industry Council after a growing sentiment that it wasn't operating effectively and it had seen its funding sources diminish. Barrett cited federal law in claiming his authority over what had been a county-dominated agency.
[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 4/26/2008]

Public Assistance Programs

As the state was on the verge of announcing the takeover of county public assistance programs that were failing to service the county's neediest, Walker announced he was asking the state to take over public assistance programs. He blamed the state for cutting funding for child care, food stamps and medical assistance, yet has himself underfunded county health and human services throughout his tenure.

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker on Monday called for the state to take over administration of major public assistance programs from the county. Walker's call for a state takeover follows a series of warnings from the state over shortcomings in the county's administration of public assistance programs.

A state funding cut four years ago for administration of child care, food stamps and medical assistance has made it difficult for the county to run the programs properly, Walker said. Since then, caseloads have grown and serious problems have surfaced with the county's job in running the programs.

Walker's release of his letter to state Health Services Secretary Karen Timberlake coincides with meetings that Timberlake and state Administration Secretary Michael Morgan were holding with Milwaukee legislators and others. The state officials were to meet with County Board Chairman Lee Holloway on the topic today.
[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2/3/2009]

- While Walker claimed to be saving tax payers' money by reining in spending, the number of people requesting food stamps increased by 71,000 families (2000-2008 increase), and medical assistance caseloads rose 28%. In 2008 alone, the year the Bush economy collapsed, MJS reported that "the number of families on food stamps rose 17%, and the number of people getting medical aid rose 6.3%, according to county figures.
- The state's unprecedented move to strip Milwaukee County of its role in administering food aid, child care and medical assistance programs was prompted by years of county mismanagement, state Health Services Secretary Karen Timberlake said. "...Sustained inability to successfully provide Income Maintenance program services to its residents, resulting in the deprivation of food assistance, eligibility for medical care, and assistance with subsidized childcare to thousands of Milwaukee County residents."
[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2/4/2009]
- Milwaukee County received more funding per capita than any other county for Income Maintenance program functions.
- Less than 5% of the incoming calls were answered for assistance to the county run call center.

- One out of every five FoodShare recipients were cut from the program in error in a given year.
- The FoodShare error rate increased from 6.2% in 2003 to 19.54% in 2008.
- Milwaukee County got more money than any other county:
 - 62% of Milwaukee's Income Maintenance programs were funded by the state, vs. 57% for the rest of the counties;
 - After Milwaukee, the next five largest counties received just 47% of IM funding from the state;
 - Milwaukee County had to pay just 15% of the total program costs for IM, while other counties were funding on average 23% of IM costs.
- Two-thirds of all complaints received by the state W-2 agencies are problems Milwaukee County residents are having with the County's FoodShare, Medicaid and child care programs.
- The county was warned as far back as 2005 that the administration of food stamps was not meeting state and federal standards and must be improved. The county was having the same problems and making the same errors four years later.
- The state and county paid over \$74,000 in penalties for delays and errors in service.
- The state and county were sued for failing to provide Medicaid and food stamp services in a timely manner.
- The state was receiving 250 to 300 calls per day from disgruntled Milwaukee County residents who were not receiving assistance through the Milwaukee County call center.
- Only 70% of benefit applications were handled within state and federal timelines, vs 85% for the rest of the state.
- Over 60% of case closures were certified as eligible for benefits within 2 months of closures.
- 92% of Milwaukee recipients of FoodShare/Medicaid also get Wisconsin Shares child care assistance.
- The County authorized 91% of all subsidy requests, vs 58% for the rest of the state – inadequate county oversight of authorized hours of Shares care for families.

[Source: Letter to Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, from Secretary of Health Services Karen Timberlake, dated February 3, 2009]

- One day after receiving notification that the state was taking over the county's public assistance programs, Walker calls the takeover "the worst of all scenarios," even though he requested the takeover himself, and pushes privatization of the badly mismanaged call center, where requests for food stamps and other assistance come in. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2/4/2009 & 2/6/2009]
- Walker calls for takeover of ALL county services, eliminate county government: Walker wants the state to take over all public assistance programs, social services for seniors & people with disabilities and the courts; cities to take over county roads; create special districts to run transit, parks, zoo and cultural institutions. But then there's still the sheriff, register of deeds, clerk of courts and county clerk – not sure where those would go.

Walker's suggestions drew criticism from Supervisor Gerry Broderick, who said Walker had been "forcing the dismantling of county government since his election" in 2002. Walker and the board have frequently clashed over the county executive's push to cut programs and freeze the property tax levy.

Supervisor John Weishan Jr. said the structure of county government wasn't the problem and blasted Walker for leadership shortcomings. Weishan called Walker's plan "political pornography." [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 7/21/2009]

Freeway Patrol

Walker asked the state to either reimburse the county for the full cost of patrolling the freeways or have the State Patrol assume the job.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 9/18/2003]

