



Milwaukee County

Department on Aging



Stephanie Sue Stein
Director
(414)289-5950

*Milwaukee County
Commission on Aging*

Viola "Vi" Hawkins
Chairperson

Alvin C. Hill, Jr.
Vice Chair

Debra J. Jupka
Secretary

Steve F. Taylor
County Supervisor

Maria Castrejon-Pérez
Patsy Delgado

Bob Haase

Gwen T. Jackson
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Lynnea Katz-Petted

Mary Kepler

Fred Kneuppel

Sylvan Leabman

Gary Mikolajczyk

Nengmay S. Vang

Johnny C. White, Jr.

Barbara Wyatt Sibley

County Board Chair Marina Dimitrijevic
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

November 4, 2014

Dear Chairwoman Dimitrijevic:

On November 3rd, 2014, the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Executive Committee and Advocacy Committee both voted unanimously to oppose last week's quick passage of a Milwaukee County Board Finance Committee budget amendment that would provide "free" bus service to county seniors and people with disabilities.

It is deeply disappointing that no one on the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging (and its committees and workgroups) was consulted about this proposal. As you know from your many years of service on our Commission, our members are appointed by the County Executive and approved by you and your colleagues to be the voice of older adults in Milwaukee County. This proposal would impact the 109,133 seniors 65+ in Milwaukee County, and the fact that no one consulted with us at any point shows disrespect for the Commission on Aging and the legislative process in general.

We also oppose this budget amendment because it is based on inaccurate information. The budget amendment states that other cities have implemented senior fare programs; in fact, Chicago greatly scaled back their program in September 2011 after a study found it cost as much as \$116 million per year; Pennsylvania's program is statewide and funded by lottery revenues; Houston only has a free program for people ages 70 and above, and Providence's program is limited to low-income seniors and people with disabilities. It is confounding that the County Board would consider public policy with such widespread impact (and substantial and undefined cost) without first defining exactly who would benefit and whether similar programs in other communities have been cost-effective. A policy change like this should not be added as a last-minute budget amendment without public analysis and discussion, but instead should be vetted through the regular legislative process.

Finally, seniors in our community have never asked for free, charitable bus service. For years we have strongly advocated for investment in various transportation programs, including the Department on Aging's Specialized Transportation Program which is hugely popular and greatly underfunded. We strongly believe in connecting seniors who cannot drive or who are otherwise isolated to programs and services that help them leave fully independent lives. Seniors in Milwaukee County have many needs, but free bus service is not one of them. In the future, please ask us and our Commission on Aging colleagues about what seniors want and need and we will be happy to tell you.

Sincerely,

Viola Vi Hawkins
Viola "Vi" Hawkins

Chair, Commission on Aging Executive Council

Bob Haase

Bob Haase, Chair

Commission on Aging Advocacy Committee

Aging Resource Center: (414) 289-6874 | TOLL FREE: 1-866-229-9695 | TRS: 7-1-1 | www.county.milwaukee.gov/aging

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County Supervisor John Weishan, Jr.
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

November 4, 2014

Dear Supervisor Weishan, Jr.:

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Commission on Aging Advocacy Committee

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County Supervisor Steve Taylor
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

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County Supervisor Anthony Staskunas
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

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County Supervisor James Schmitt
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

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Dear Supervisor Schmitt:

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County Supervisor Peggy Romo West
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

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Dear Supervisor Romo West:

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County Supervisor Khalif Rainey
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

November 4, 2014

Dear Supervisor Rainey:

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County Supervisor Michael Mayo, Sr.
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

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County Supervisor Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
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County Supervisor Patricia Jursik
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Sincerely,

Viola Vi Hawkins

Viola "Vi" Hawkins

Chair, Commission on Aging Executive Council

Bob Haase

Bob Haase

Commission on Aging Advocacy Committee

1220 West Vliet Street | Suite 302 | Milwaukee, WI 53205

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Milwaukee County

Department on Aging



Stephanie Sue Stein
Director
(414)289-5950

*Milwaukee County
Commission on Aging*

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Nengmay S. Vang

Johnny C. White, Jr.

Barbara Wyatt Sibley

County Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr.
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

November 4, 2014

Dear Supervisor Johnson, Jr.:

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County Supervisor Jason Haas
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

November 4, 2014

Dear Supervisor Haas:

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County Supervisor David Cullen
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

November 4, 2014

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County Supervisor Gerry Broderick
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

November 4, 2014

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County Supervisor David Bowen
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

November 4, 2014

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County Supervisor Mark Borkowski
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

November 4, 2014

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County Supervisor Deanna Alexander
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St. – Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

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