



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

Lee Holloway
Chairman of the Board

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For Immediate Release
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WHAT'S THIS?

Milwaukee, WI – County Board Chairman Lee Holloway responded sharply to criticism of the County Board's adoption of a County Budget with a 0.3% property tax increase.

"The criticism of the County's tax levy by so-called responsible government groups is purposely misleading and irresponsible. The idea that this community should be up in arms over the County's miniscule one-third of one percent tax increase is just ludicrous," Holloway said.

"Take a look at the property tax increases by other municipalities and jurisdictions," he added. "The City of Milwaukee has a tax increase of over 5%. Suburban tax increases range from 1.3% to 8.1%. The Metropolitan Sewerage District tax levy is up 6.2%, MATC 5.4% and MPS 3.6%. Waukesha County is increasing its tax levy by 3.9%. Where is the outrage over these much larger tax increases? And why is Milwaukee County, with only a 0.3% tax increase being held to an arbitrary standard that no other local government is even close to meeting, in light of increased employee health care costs and dwindling state aids?"

"For our association of commerce and others to be secretly bankrolling misleading radio ads singling out the County for criticism, when we have the lowest tax increase in the area, is simply irresponsible. It is also reprehensible," said Holloway. "It is especially appalling that these ads talked about the County Board increasing taxes by \$11 million-- when we actually increased them \$760,000. These are groups who should be working with us, not against us, and this is very disappointing."

Holloway went on to note that even County Executive Scott Walker praised the work of the County Board. "He has called our action a victory for the taxpayers," Holloway noted. "Earlier, he praised the work of the County Board Finance Committee as 'wise' and said we 'showed fiscal constraint'. So, what is this? Who are these people criticizing the lowest tax increase around, and what is their real agenda?" Holloway asked.

"Is it responsible government to cut services in the Medical Examiner's office so that families of the deceased have to wait longer for information on their departed loved ones?" Holloway asked. "Or to eliminate the effective farm and fish hatchery program at the House of Correction which trains inmates and feeds the poor? Or to cut County auditors at a time when we are reinventing County government? Just to save each taxpayer a few pennies? The County Board didn't think so, so we provided needed funding for these services. And still our tax increase is tiny. That is what I call responsible government."

Holloway went on to praise the work of the Finance Committee under the leadership of its chairman, Supervisor Richard D. Nyklewicz, Jr., along with the work of the County Board as a whole.

"We achieved a balance between providing needed services and enacting a budget that taxpayers can afford. Even the County Executive recognized this. Politics isn't the art of the perfect. It's the art of the possible. And working together, with a diversity of backgrounds and different viewpoints, it was the County Board who acted responsibly, not these groups who are accountable to no one. And we will continue to act responsibly for the people, not pandering to talk radio or fringe groups looking for attention."

(NOTE: See attached listing of property tax levy increases for Milwaukee County municipalities and other area jurisdictions.)

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