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Details:

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2007-08

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs (SC-LEUA)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
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INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

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What was that candidate thinking?

Posted: Jan. 5, 2008



Daniel Bice
No Quarter
E-MAIL

One of the last things a candidate in a tough race wants to do in an election year is cast a "bad" vote.

You know, one that leaves supporters baffled and opponents grinning.

But that's exactly what state Sen. **Lena Taylor** - a Milwaukee Democrat running for county executive - did last month.

Without drawing any press coverage, Taylor voted for a proposal, backed by the police union, that would have allowed certain fired Milwaukee cops to continue receiving pay from city taxpayers after being fired.

Even the **Milwaukee Police Association** was taken aback.

"I was surprised, yes," union boss **John Balcerzak** said Friday. "We were surprised by that . . . but were appreciative."

But not so appreciative that it gave her its endorsement. In fact, Balcerzak said, the union had already given that to her opponent, County Executive **Scott Walker**, a Wauwatosa Republican.

But thanks, anyway.

So if she wasn't positioning for the endorsement, why did Taylor take a potentially unpopular stand by siding with the union on a hot-button issue in the heat of a campaign?

You figure it out.

Last month, the Senate was set to vote on a measure to cut off pay for all fired Milwaukee officers. The bill picked up steam after it came out that the city continued to pay several cops who had been fired for their role in the beating of **Frank Jude Jr.**

But then Sen. **Jeff Plale**, a South Milwaukee Democrat with close ties to the police union, tried to rewrite the bill by carving out an exception for cops fired for misdemeanors or rule violations. They would be paid pending any appeals, which can take months or even years.

Plale's proposal went down to defeat 20-13, with Taylor backing the weakened version. Later, she voted for the original bill, which passed 30-3.

Taylor's campaign explained her two votes in a short statement.

"Lena wanted a bill passed to save for the residents and taxpayers of the City and County of Milwaukee," said the e-mail from campaign manager **John Zapfel**. "Lena is about getting things done."

Whatever that means.

The mayor's chief of staff, **Patrick Curley**, took a shot at all three Milwaukee lawmakers - Plale, Taylor and Sen. **Alberta Darling** - who tried to gut major portions of the bill.

"We were surprised someone from the Milwaukee delegation introduced it," Curley said. "We were surprised anyone in the Milwaukee delegation voted for it."

Rep. **Spencer Coggs**, a Milwaukee Democrat who was a chief sponsor of the bill, said Taylor's first vote left him scratching his head.

"I know she had been talking to the Milwaukee Police Association quite a bit, so they obviously, probably, swayed her," Coggs said. "But it doesn't make logical sense to me for anyone to support a watered-down version of the bill."

For one, he said, the original bill would almost certainly be popular among Taylor's constituents. He said people all over the state are outspoken in opposition to the current practice, under which Milwaukee has paid \$4.4 million to fired officers since 1990. No other Wisconsin cops get this perk.

Coggs pointed to an informal survey conducted in November by Sen. **Tim Carpenter** of his district, which includes many Milwaukee cops. Overall, 86% of the 1,069 residents who responded to the mailer favored tossing current state law.

What's more, Coggs said, Plale's proposal would have kept folks on the city payroll even if they had been fired for such acts as exposing themselves to a minor or lying to a superior. He said he thinks most Milwaukee County voters would see these as serious offenses.

When the vote came down, Coggs said he expected Taylor, who sits next to him in the Senate, to reject the union-backed alternative.

"I tell you," he said, "I was rather surprised."

Clearly, he wasn't alone.

Not-so-fond farewell

What exactly is going on at the state Department of Justice?

James Warren, a former Milwaukee cop who headed the agency's Division of Criminal Investigation, sent out a stunning e-mail late last month announcing his retirement, which took effect Thursday.

"I regret the short notice, but due to circumstances beyond my control I had to make this difficult decision with this narrow time frame," Warren wrote. "The past year has been very difficult for me, and my future at DOJ looked even

more difficult which all made my immediate retirement my only feasible option."

Reads like the kind of note you send out hoping it will become public.

This is just how unexpected the retirement was: Warren is still listed, by agency title, on the department's Web site as a speaker at a Feb. 20 conference in Appleton.

Asked about the matter, department spokesman **Kevin St. John** said Warren left voluntarily. But St. John was mum beyond that:

"DOJ does not have any additional comment on Jim Warren's retirement."

Daniel Bice can be contacted by phone at (414) 223-5468 or by e-mail at dbice@journalsentinel.com.

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Unfairly targeting Milwaukee officers

By JOHN A. BALCERZAK

Posted: Jan. 6, 2008

When asked last year about the pay for discharged Milwaukee police officers, Gov. Jim Doyle was quoted as saying that all police officers in Wisconsin should be treated equally. The Milwaukee Police Association wholeheartedly agrees.

It is a common misconception that a City of Milwaukee police officer receives a greater benefit when discharged than other police officers throughout the state. I am writing to dispel that myth.

Currently, the pay for discharged Milwaukee police officers continues until they receive a due process hearing before the Fire and Police Commission. This is the same result for every other Wisconsin police officer. The only difference is that Milwaukee's police chief is the only police chief in Wisconsin who can discharge an officer before a due process hearing by an independent body.

There is legislation being proposed that would single out Milwaukee police officers. While well-intentioned, the legislation would harm unjustly all hard-working Milwaukee police officers and their families rather than just those whom it is meant to target. It treats an officer who has been accused of a rule violation in the same manner as an officer who has been charged with a felony.

This legislation would stop the pay for all discharged Milwaukee police officers before they have a due process hearing. This would discriminate against all Milwaukee police officers simply because of the community in which they work.

Over the past year, the Fire and Police Commission has reinstated five officers who had been wrongly discharged. These officers would have been without pay or a means to provide for their families while awaiting their commission hearings if the current legislation had been in place. These cases are the very reason for the current law, which has been in place since 1977 and provides for a hearing by the commission before an officer's pay can be stopped.

Any change in the law must be tailored to achieve the real goal, which is to stop the pay for those officers who the courts believe should not be a police officer. The Milwaukee Police Association has proposed a number of significant changes to the current law to do just that.

One main element is that an officer's pay should stop when he or she is charged with a felony, bound over for trial at the preliminary hearing and also discharged by the chief as a result of the same act(s) that constituted the criminal



charge. The pay for any such officer would remain stopped unless he or she was reinstated by the commission. The other elements proposed by the association would ensure that the commission hearings are conducted in a timely manner, thereby minimizing the pay for discharged police officers.

The Milwaukee Police Association also believes that raising the hiring standards would lead to less disciplinary problems in the first place. Applicants should be required to have at least 60 college credits upon appointment and be subjected to a more stringent background check.

We ask that the public keep in mind that an officer's actions, whether reviewed in the courts or in the public eye, are judged on a "reasonableness" standard. "Reasonable" is defined as "rationally fitting, proper or sensible." The Milwaukee Police Association strongly believes that, after reading and understanding its proposal, the public will deem it to be "reasonable" as well.

John A. Balcerzak is president of the Milwaukee Police Association.

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Your Opinions

From Journal Sentinel readers

Posted: Jan. 6, 2008

ELECTION 2008

Campaign so far has been depressing

Even with the Iowa caucuses just completed, and with the New Hampshire primary only a day away, I find it hard to have any enthusiasm for this current presidential campaign.

With the exceptions of Ron Paul on the Republican side and Dennis Kucinich with the Democrats, it is difficult to find any candidate who is serious about ending the war in Iraq. Especially among the front-runners, the attitude seems to be that war needs to continue indefinitely into the future. The Democrats talk vaguely about withdrawing our troops, but they don't have their hearts in it. For anybody who wants this wretched war to end, this campaign is depressing at best.

The problem with a democracy is that often we get the government we deserve.

In this campaign, I believe that most of the candidates reflect the desires and priorities of the American people. If this is true, then most Americans, even if they dislike the war in Iraq, really are not interested in doing anything serious to end it. It means that Americans have become accustomed to the idea of being in a state of continuous warfare.

It means that, for all practical purposes, we have given up on the goal of living in peace.

Francis Pauc
Oak Creek

EEOC

It's wrong to junk system that's working

The Journal Sentinel editorialized on Jan. 2 against the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ruling that



employers may reduce retiree health benefits when they reach Medicare eligibility at age 65 ("An unhealthy ruling"). The editorial concluded that this demonstrated "health care in this country is hopelessly broken and in desperate need of overhaul or reform," an obvious advocacy of government-run universal health care.

This conclusion is unwarranted. For many years, it has been a common practice of companies to adjust their retiree health care programs to account for Medicare coverage, with appropriate premium reduction. It makes no sense for company health care programs to supersede an employee-funded government entitlement. In most cases, companies retain a supplementary level of coverage or subsidize private plans.

While there may be some abuses, the EEOC ruling is hardly a justification for junking a system that works very well for the great majority in favor of socialized medicine that has been problematic for most countries that have it. They still come to us with our "broken" system for treatment of severe medical emergencies.

Some tweaking may be in order, but let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Alfred J. Neuhauser

Wales

AUTISM

There are challenges to providing treatment

In his Jan. 2 column, "There is hope in facing the challenges of autism," community columnist Roger Frank Bass described how autistic children need effective and funded therapy. These children also need competent therapists. But in Wisconsin, there are few therapists, so children can wait several years to receive services.

The only program in Wisconsin that trains master's level behavior analysts is at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, but UWM produces just a couple of therapists every few years because few behavior analytic faculty are available to train applied analysts.

Marshall Lev Dermer

Associate professor, behavior analysis

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Milwaukee

SMOKING BAN

Drinking should be our top priority

There have been many articles written in favor of banning smoking in Wisconsin. In the "old days," smoking was very popular, in the movies, taverns and even in the home. Yet children had less asthma and allergies and, yes, there were fewer cancer deaths from smoking.

I am in favor of a smoking ban but not without something being done about a drinking ban. Yes, there is something valid about secondhand smoke, but look at the innocent people affected by people who are drunk. Nobody talks about

secondhand drinking! Drinking has caused not only car accidents but child abuse, spouse abuse, broken families, homelessness and much more. These abuses weren't caused by smokers but by drinkers.

Look into how many legislators are supported by the alcohol industry, not only the Tavern League but the alcohol producers.

Make drinking a No. 1 priority, with smoking as a second priority. Do something about a drinking ban; then we'll consider something for a smoking ban.

Kathy Banaszak

Colgate

SNOW REMOVAL

There is a group that may be up to the task

This is in response to the reluctance of the Milwaukee Common Council to act on a resolution to clear crosswalks and bus stops within 24 hours of a major snowfall ("Snow mounds draw concern," Jan. 4).

Why not put the numerous police officers who have been fired, yet are still being paid pending appeal, to work shoveling? I can see no better use of my tax dollars this winter!

Kate Madison

Milwaukee

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Fired cops: due process, yes; pay, no

By SPENCER COGGS

Posted: Jan. 13, 2008

I was profoundly disappointed to read the Milwaukee Police Association's latest attempt to defend police officers who continue to receive pay and benefits after being fired for a variety of offenses, such as sledding and bowling on duty, stealing from crime scenes and sometimes abusing citizens ("Unfairly targeting Milwaukee officers," Jan. 7).

Although I have worked for years on legislation addressing this issue, I still experience disbelief every time the union takes this stance, even though the officers are not working and their appeal drags on before the Fire and Police Commission.

To Milwaukee taxpayers, it must read like a page from "Ripley's Believe It Or Not." But believe it they must. Taxpayers have paid out nearly \$5 million to these officers since 1990. This is where my disbelief turns to outrage.

The outrage stems from the waste of tax dollars and personnel who could be put to use fighting crime on the streets right now. As we know from FBI crime statistics, violent crime in Milwaukee jumped 13% in the most recent reporting period. Violent crime includes murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault.

While portions of my Milwaukee Senate district have turned into shooting galleries, taxpayers are supporting fired officers to sit on their backsides and collect pay and benefits. It's not only illogical; it's immoral.

The union defends this practice by claiming that officers have not been provided due process, meaning the opportunity to defend themselves before they are fired. However, that claim ignores the Police Department's extensive investigation and review process that by any municipal employment standard is fair, inclusive and accountable.

The PI-21 internal investigation offers ample safeguards for officers to ensure their participation in the review process. Interviews with officers are taped and provided to the officers. They have a right to have a union representative participate, and answers provided by the officer cannot be used in a criminal proceeding.

If charges are issued, the officer is given a copy of the formal charges and a summary of the investigation. That information is also sent to the union. The officer may file a response, and the response may include mitigating circumstances and a request for investigators to interview additional witnesses.

The chief then decides on discipline, which could include firing. In a normal workplace, pay and benefits end for those who are fired. But not on the Milwaukee police force. Those officers are paid thousands upon thousands if they

appeal their firing to the Fire and Police Commission - and many do. Even if they are convicted of a crime, their pay and benefits continue right through to the day they are sentenced.

The union has made many attempts to water down the legislation that I and Rep. Barbara Toles (D-Milwaukee) have authored. The legislation would end pay and benefits for fired officers. And the union has tried to convince the public that the fired officers are being treated unfairly.

However, any common sense view leads to the conclusion that those officers who are fired for violating rules or committing crimes do not deserve pay and benefits. There is a due process review, and it is extensive.

Police officers would be better served if their union helped us root out rotten apples. No work force likes those who try to cheat the system, especially those sworn to uphold the law.

Spencer Coggs represents the 6th Senate District on Milwaukee's northwest side.

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SB 176
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TUESDAY, Jan. 15, 2008, 10:31 a.m.

By Stacy Forster

Panel advances police pay bill

Madison - An Assembly panel this morning approved a bill to end pay for fired Milwaukee police officers who are charged with felonies.

The Assembly's Committee on Corrections and Courts voted 6-5 along partisan lines to change the bill, which passed with stricter standards in the Senate on a 30-3 vote. The original bill would have cut off pay for all officers, including those fired over misdemeanors and rule violations, not only felonies.

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and Democrats who support the original proposal have said it's the only way to adequately protect Milwaukee taxpayers, who have paid nearly \$4.4 million in wages and benefits to fired officers since 1990.

But the Milwaukee Police Association and others have said the original bill was too harsh because officers fired over lesser charges wouldn't have the chance to defend themselves before losing pay.

The bill now heads to the full Assembly.

▼ THE REST OF TODAY'S POSTS...▼

TUESDAY, Jan. 15, 2008, 12:23 p.m.

By Linda Spice

Warrant issued for escapee

A warrant has been issued for the arrest of a 25-year-old inmate who walked away from the Community Correctional Center early today, according to the county's House of Correction.

The HOC received information about 4:20 a.m. that Corey L. McElroy walked away from the center, 1004 N. 10th St.,



01-16-2008

Assembly committee passes watered down version of bill denying pay for fired city cops

Story compiled by MCJ Staff

State Rep. Barbara Toles expressed disappointment at an Assembly committee's passage of a watered down version her bill to rescind the salaries of fired Milwaukee police officers.

"With Tuesday's vote, the Assembly Committee on Corrections and Courts demonstrated a lack of concern for the taxpayers of Milwaukee and leaves us questioning the integrity of the legislative process," Toles said Wednesday in a statement in response to the committee's vote.

The committee's vote comes one

month after the state Senate approved the bill by a bi-partisan vote of 30 to three. Toles' bill would change the 27-year-old state law that currently allows fired Milwaukee officers to receive full pay and benefits until their appeals are exhausted with the Fire and Police Commission.

The committee approved Tuesday a substitute amendment offered by committee chairman, Rep. Garey Bies, which would cut off pay only for officers who have been terminated and charged with felonies.

"The committee voted on the premise that only officers accused



State Rep. Barbara Toles of the worst crimes' should have their pay ended," Toles said.

"Officers fired for committing

(continued on page 12)

The Milwaukee Community Journal January 16, 2008 Page 12

Assembly committee passes watered down bill prohibiting pay to fired Milwaukee cops

(continued from page 1)

misdemeanors or violations of department rules will continue to be paid after termination," she stated.

Toles said misdemeanors are not minor violations, stressing that they are criminal offenses.

The state representative listed some of the reasons officers have been fired from the Milwaukee Police Department which include exposing their genitals to children, domestic violence, sexual assault, intimidating witnesses, battery of a handcuffed prisoner, testing positive for marijuana, stealing money from the scene of an investigation, being intoxicated while on duty, and filing false worker's compensation claims for injuries sustained while sledding on duty.

"The Milwaukee Police Association (the union repre-

senting the city's police officers) argues that an officer who is fired for a rule violation is different from an officer who commits a felony," Toles said.

"However, in the real world, employees who violate standard workplace rules such as falsifying reports, accumulating excessive hours of unexcused or unapproved absences, or lying to supervisors can expect to be fired. Upon termination their pay stops."

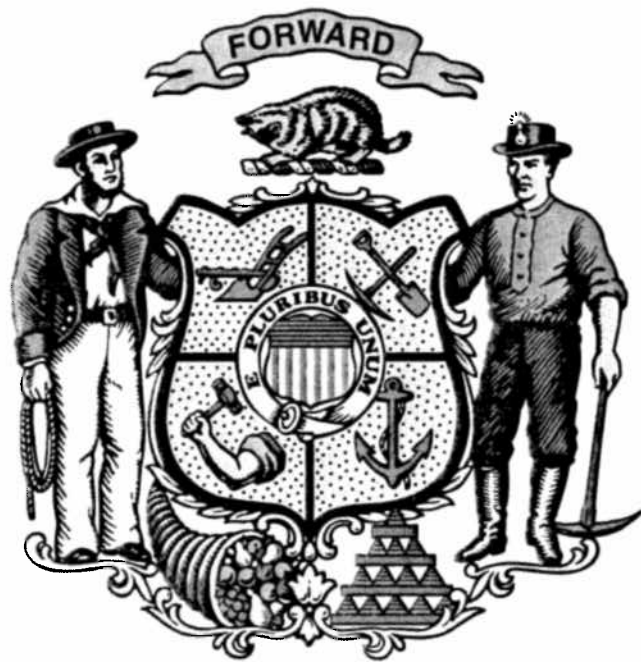
Through a spokesperson, state Sen. Spencer Coggs, the chief sponsor of the bill in the Senate, also expressed disappointment at the committee amendment and vote.

Dave de Felice, an aide to Sen. Coggs, said the senator doesn't believe the amended bill does what needs to be done in ending payment to fired police officers.

The bill now goes before the full Assembly for a vote.

SB 176 folder

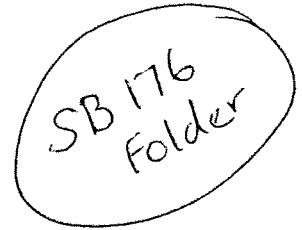






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Editorial: Make it bipartisan

The Assembly and its speaker should take the lead from Rep. Steve Nass of Whitewater to correct a defect in state law that allows fired Milwaukee police officers to collect pay.

From the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Jan. 17, 2008

We often talk on this page about the need for state lawmakers in both parties to work together for the good of the public and the taxpayer. To our pleasant surprise, we saw that surface this week.

After an Assembly committee diluted a bill to end the outrageous practice of paying fired Milwaukee police officers, Rep. Steve Nass (R-Whitewater) on Wednesday called for Speaker Mike Huebsch (R-West Salem) to do the right thing. In a letter, Nass said the amendment "gutted" the bill. He asked Huebsch to schedule a vote by the end of the month on the original version to provide relief to Milwaukee taxpayers.

The original bill, which was passed in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote by the Senate last month, would cut off pay for Milwaukee police officers fired after being charged with felonies and misdemeanors as well as rule violations. The Assembly committee revised the measure so it would apply only to felonies. But misdemeanors can involve serious crimes as well, such as intimidating a witness and fourth-degree sexual assault. The current law, which allows officers to receive pay until exhausting their appeals, has cost city taxpayers \$4.4 million in wages and benefits since 1990.

Nass, one of three Republican sponsors of the Assembly bill that was gutted Tuesday, said that by not acting, legislators would "fail to protect taxpayers from blatantly obvious defects in state law."

Although Nass told Huebsch he prefers a statewide solution to the problem and that a different bill is being drafted to accomplish that goal, he pointed out that it's unlikely that bill would be approved before the end of the session.

"The taxpayers of Milwaukee can't afford to wait another year for a statewide solution that may never pass," Nass said in the letter. "Please put an end to the political pandering that has blocked this legislation for years."

Nass' candor and concern for Milwaukee taxpayers are refreshing. The rest of his colleagues in the Assembly should keep that in mind when it's their turn to do the right thing.

What's your opinion on legislation to address pay for fired Milwaukee police officers? Send a letter to: [Journal Sentinel editorial department](#)



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Your Opinions

From Journal Sentinel readers

Posted: Jan. 17, 2008

POLICE PAY

Crime pays - for Milwaukee police

I applaud Sen. Spencer Coggs (D-Milwaukee) for his effort to prevent fired Milwaukee police officers from collecting their pay checks while their appeals are pending ("Fired Cops: due process, yes; pay, no," Jan. 14). These convicted officers continue receiving their wages and benefits right until they are sentenced. What other job offers this type of security? As soon as they are convicted of a crime, their pay and benefits should stop immediately. Police officers have to be held accountable for the choices they make.

The average worker is out of a paycheck the moment he or she is fired. Let these cops file for unemployment benefits like any other person. Or require them to repay the money they have collected if they lose their appeal. Milwaukee police are the only police in the state who have this generous rule. The police union and its lobbyists make sure our local government representatives never make any changes to this law. Voters should not re-elect officials who side with the police union and allow this travesty to continue.

While Coggs is condemning the fired cops receiving a salary, what about the alderman sitting in jail, still collecting his paycheck and holding his seat?

Who says crime does not pay? It pays if you are a convicted cop or an alderman sitting in jail.

Dolores Fabian

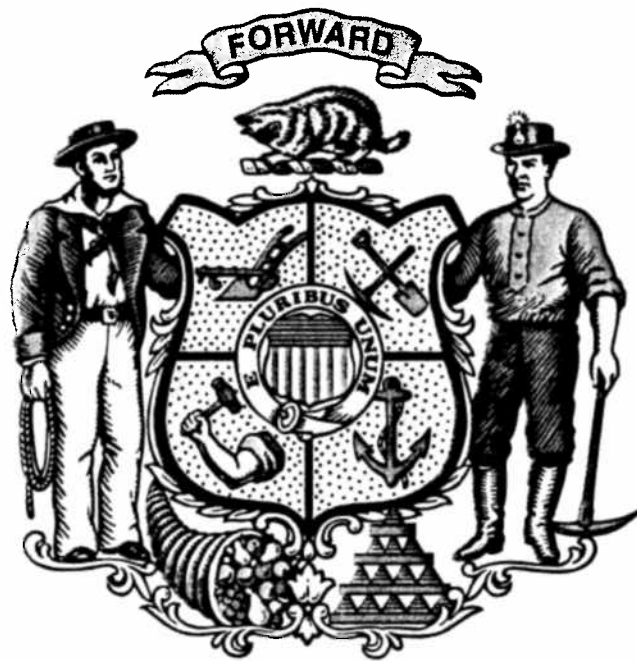
Oak Creek

UWM EXPANSION

Consider expanding closer to campus

Although I agree with the idea and philosophy behind UW-Milwaukee growing its research capabilities, I'm not sold

SB 176
Folder



Are We A Little Touchy?

Accountability irks school choice advocates

School choice advocates George and Susan Mitchell, of Shorewood, have been living very comfortably off of wealthy, right-wing supporters of the school voucher program, but they quickly attacked a state legislator this past week for trying to impose some accountability standards on these dubious choice schools. City of Milwaukee property taxpayers are paying additional taxes—often an increase of several hundred dollars a year—to support these choice schools that lack public accountability. Hey George, we understand that you live in Shorewood and this does not affect your property taxes, but why shouldn't Milwaukee property taxpayers have some accountability for their tax dollars?

This Is Leadership?: He had a chance to transform the way workers in this region commute to jobs—and influence businesses that are considering locating in southeastern Wisconsin. But state Rep. Robin Vos (R-Racine) took a pass on supporting the stalled Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail line when his support was critical to the project's success. Now, Vos wants a public referendum on the project and possible funding mechanisms.

But we've got to ask: Why did the voters elect someone who can't make a decision when he's given the perfect opportunity to do so? If Vos didn't like how KRM would be funded, why didn't he propose a new source and convince his colleagues to go along with his ideas? While real leaders take into account their constituents' concerns, they don't drag their heels when they have a chance to influence such an important public policy.

Protecting Rogue Cops: Even though the state Assembly had a chance to do the right thing and finally end the practice of paying Milwaukee police officers after they've been fired, instead, Republicans on the Assembly's Committee on Corrections and Courts decided to protect them. On a party-line vote, Republicans approved a measure that the Milwaukee Police Association approves—to only end the pay of those officers who have been charged with felonies. A stronger version of the bill

passed the state Senate on a 30-3 vote, and Milwaukee-area representatives are clearly in favor of it.

If You Film It, They Will Show It: The state's tax breaks for film, TV and entertainment productions kicked in at the beginning of the year, and now Marcus Theatres has offered to show Wisconsin-based films on some of its screens—and there are more than 600 to choose from. Scott Robbe of Film Wisconsin, the state's film office, cheered the announcement. "By offering filmmakers a guaranteed commercial theatrical run for their work, coupled with our incentives and our untapped potential as a film location, we anticipate a significant influx of creative projects coming to the state," Robbe said in a statement.

Campaign Reform, With a Catch: Last year's race for the state Supreme Court shattered all financial records. But that doesn't mean that voters want a repeat of sleazy attack ads funded by supporters of a judicial candidate. According to a new poll released by the Justice at Stake Campaign, 65% of likely Wisconsin voters who were polled support public financing of judicial campaigns, and only

26% oppose it. The idea had bipartisan support among those surveyed.

While public financing of campaigns sounds like a good idea, and would encourage individuals who are not super-wealthy to run for office, there's a big loophole—special interests could still run their issue ads, just as they have in the past. And tons of these ads blanket the airwaves before an election. Just one year ago, the conservative business group Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce spent \$2.2 million to support Annette Ziegler's campaign for the state's highest court, and the Club for Growth spent an additional \$400,000. Ziegler won, but she's been a controversial pick—one who is under ethical disciplinary procedures from the court she now serves.

Poll Workers Needed: Neil Albrecht, assistant director of the city of Milwaukee's Election Commission, said that a variety of additional poll workers are needed for the Feb. 19 primary election. He's predicting that turnout will be heavy, especially on the East Side. If you're a city resident, contact his office at 286-3491.

Stop the War: The fifth Iraq Moratorium, a grassroots effort to end the war, will be held on Friday, Jan. 18. In Milwaukee, a vigil will be held at Water Street and Wisconsin Avenue, from 5 to 6 p.m. The event is sponsored by Peace Action Wisconsin and Coalition for a Just Peace. For more information about other peace events throughout the state, go to www.iraqmoratorium.org.

Remembering MLK: The eighth-annual Dr. Martin Luther King Social Justice

Program will be held on Monday, Jan. 21, at noon, at Bucketworks, 1340 N. Sixth Street. Participants will march to the King statue north of Walnut Street on MLK Drive. The Peace Action Martin Luther King Justice Award will be given to former Secretary of State Vel Phillips, Dr. William Finlayson, Rev. Joe and Joyce Ellwanger, Reuben Harpole and Lucille Berrien. For more information, go to www.peaceactionwi.org.

America's Black Holocaust Museum and the Historic King Drive Business Improvement District (BID) will also hold special events on Jan. 21. There will be a free bus tour (10 a.m.) and forum on the BID's next catalytic project. To register, contact Marjorie at 265-5809 or marjorie@kingdrivebid.com. If you wear your "Living the Dream" T-shirt, you can tour the museum for \$2. (Contact Marjorie to purchase a shirt if you don't have one.) And the film *Boycott* will be screened at 12:30 p.m. at the museum, located at 2233 N. Fourth Street.

Bridging Two Worlds: Local poet Jeff Poniewaz is seeking more students for his off-campus UW-Milwaukee course titled "Literature of Ecological Vision." This introductory survey explores some of the key examples of writing about nature and the environment that also qualify as great literature and includes Thoreau, Whitman, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson and others, plus a special section on the eco output of Beat writers. It will meet Tuesdays from 6 to 8:40 p.m., beginning Jan. 22 at Shorewood High School on Oakland and Capitol. For more information, call 229-6209.

What's your take?
Write: editor@shepex.com.

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Editorial: Citizens, much like us

The state Assembly should stick with a Senate version of a bill that would allow Milwaukee to quit paying fired officers charged with crimes.

From the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Feb. 15, 2008

A City of Milwaukee analysis shows that it will be in the city's interest to continue to oppose any compromise that dilutes a bill that would withhold pay from officers appealing their dismissals from the force.

One proposed compromise by Rep. Garey Bies (R-Sister Bay) would withhold the pay of these officers only if they face felony and Class A misdemeanors.

But as we noted in a previous editorial, misdemeanors can include such serious crimes as intimidating a witness and fourth-degree sexual assault. And allowing officers charged with Class B misdemeanors to keep their pay on appeal would exempt those with offenses such as domestic violence.

The Assembly should reject the amendment and pass the tougher version already passed overwhelmingly by the state Senate. The Senate's measure would cut off pay for Milwaukee police officers fired after being charged with felonies and misdemeanors as well as rule violations.

It's true, including Class A misdemeanors and felonies in the bill would cover most of the 45 officers convicted of 72 crimes since 2001, according to an analysis prepared by Fire and Police Commission Executive Director Michael Tobin for Mayor Tom Barrett.

However, six officers were convicted of Class B misdemeanors. These six committed crimes that included domestic violence, making threats over the telephone, firing a gun in a public place while off-duty and "without any lawful purpose" and threatening a restaurant employee with a gun. Two other officers committed Class U misdemeanors and were not fired - one committed a second drunken driving offense, and another violated a restraining order.

Simply, police officers should not enjoy a privilege denied most of the people they are paid to protect. Generally, when people are fired, they lose their pay. If, on appeal, they are reinstated, they get back pay.

Harsh, maybe; disruptive, for sure. Police officers deserve respect and admiration for just donning the uniform. That is best preserved, however, by the notion that they are citizens more like the people they protect than they are different.

At the very least, any compromise would have to include Class B misdemeanors among the charges that cause an accused officer to lose his or her pay pending appeal. It's silly that Milwaukee alone in the state has to pay these fired officers on appeal.

State legislators should stick with the tougher bill.

Should fired Milwaukee police officers who have been charged with crimes be paid while they appeal their dismissals? Send a letter to: [Journal Sentinel editorial department](#)

[Buy a link here](#)

From the Feb. 16, 2008 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
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MCJ EDITORIAL

State lawmakers must pass bill prohibiting pay for fired cops

We agree with Milwaukee Alderman Joe Davis, Sr. urging state legislators not to allow state Rep. Barbara Tole's bill prohibiting Milwaukee Police officers being paid while they appeal their firings to be "watered down."

This bill needs to go through so that we can stop doing what other major cities don't do: pay cops for being fired for breaking the law.

Since 1990, Milwaukee taxpayers have paid over \$4 million to police officers fired for just cause.

We must stop rewarding cops for wrongdoing. It sends a confusing and negative message to our youth that crime-even committed by police officers-does pay.

And with property taxes the way they are in this city, as well as state taxes, we can ill afford to waste money on fired cops. That \$4 million could be put to better use.

As a matter of fact, the money could be used by the MPD to hire and train men and women who will uphold the law while protecting and serving the citizens of this city.

Milwaukee residents should call their legislators and urge them to pass the original bill written by Toles that is being co-sponsored in the state Senate by Sen. Spencer Coggs.

The state legislature must ignore the Milwaukee Police Association, the union that represents the city's police officers and others opposed to the proposal, and pass the bill created by Toles and soon.

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Davis urges rejection of weaker bill prohibiting pay for fired city cops

Story compiled by MCJ Staff

Milwaukee Ald. Joe Davis, Sr. urged members of the state Assembly's Committee on Corrections and Courts Monday to reject a "watered down" version of state Rep. Barbara Toles' bill prohibiting pay for fired Milwaukee police officers.

Davis' request came the day before a state Senate committee—the Labor, Elections and Urban Affairs Committee—recommended changing the law to prohibit payment of fired officers while they appeal.

Sen. Spencer Coggis is the chief sponsor of the bill in the Senate.

"It is time for our state legislators to do the right thing and remove this benefit that is found literally nowhere else in the nation, and that

means approving the bill offered by Milwaukee Rep. Barbara Toles," said Davis in a statement.

"In the world that most workers live in, employees who have serious violations of workplace rules such as falsifying reports or lying to supervisors can expect to be terminated, and their pay goes away," Davis continued.

"It's time for state legislators to take the burden of paying fired officers off the backs of the taxpayers of Milwaukee."

Toles' bill would change the 27-year-old state law that currently allows fired Milwaukee police officers to receive full pay and benefits until their appeals are exhausted with the Fire and Police Commission.

Such appeals often take months, if not years before a final ruling is made. Until then, fired officers can continue to draw pay from the city. Records show that since 1990, \$4.4 million in wages and benefits has been paid by Milwaukee to fired officers.

However, an Assembly version (the watered down version referred to by Davis) allows officers fighting termination to defend themselves in a hearing before the Fire and Police Commission before losing their pay.

At such a hearing, the chief of police would be required to present a case against an officer to the commission, which would then make the decision about termination.

Yet a news report noted the substi-

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Davis urges lawmakers to support strong, original version of bill

(continued from page 1)

tute version of the bill would stop pay for fired officers who are charged with felonies.

Those accused of misdemeanors or rule violations would receive a hearing before pay is stopped.

Davis said Toles bill is strong and acceptable to city leaders. A crowded Senate hearing last week on that version of the bill attracted dozens of speakers, including Mayor Tom Barrett.

On Tuesday, the Assembly committee debated Toles' bill and the watered down version. The committee decided to delay a vote on both versions of the bill, meaning the bill won't go before the full Assembly until sometime next week.

It is not known if the full Senate will vote on the measure when it meets Tuesday.