



Dear Representative Zepnick,

Wisconsin County Constitutional Officers Inc (WCCO) is dedicated to providing the best public service possible to our constituents. This letter is in response to the proposed amendment to the Milwaukee County Executive's 2011 Recommended Budget which states as follows:

"The Division of Intergovernmental Relations is directed to work to obtain changes in State law and the Wisconsin Constitution to allow Milwaukee County to consolidate the functions of the County Treasurer and the Register of Deeds, which are administrative in nature, into the County Clerk's Office, and abolish the Treasurer and Register of Deeds positions. This initiative is intended as a step towards streamlining County administrative/customer service functions that currently are performed by separate constitutional offices, and potentially achieving tax levy savings."

The county treasurer (tax collection), register of deeds (land records which the tax collection is based upon) and county clerk (county business/election administration) are three pillars of which county government was built around. The framers of our Wisconsin constitution recognized the importance of the integrity of these functions and set them apart as separate elected offices from other county offices.

The Milwaukee County amendment suggests that the initiative is intended as a step towards streamlining county administrative/customer service functions, however, the nature of responsibilities of the three offices are not similar. Three offices combined into one cannot be effective or efficient in the delivery of public service.

Elected officials are held accountable directly by the people who elect them. Voters deserve the right to choose who will provide the most effective and responsible public service in each respective office. Merging the Register of Deeds and County Treasurer into the County Clerk's office reduces the accountability of the positions. In addition, constituents will lose two elected voices diminishing the voice of the people.

County elected officials deal with people's records and monies, which affects their lives in every respect. Since county elected officials are the guardians of the public records and monies, they should answer directly to the people whose records and monies they protect.

WCCO firmly believes that responding to continuing changes and requirements is best accomplished by electing officials who can be sensitive to the needs of the people. The contact with the public never ceases as the electorate is the elected official's boss. The elected official's performance is graded with a passing or failing grade with each election.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss further Milwaukee County's proposal.

Regards,

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