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NEWS RELEASE

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Sheriff Thanks County Board for Public Safety Support

Milwaukee, WI – Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. issued the following statement after the Milwaukee County Board's approval of the 2013 budget:

I am reassured by this week's actions of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, led by Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic of the 4th District. They showed impressive unity and resolve by overriding the veto of County Executive Chris Abele (by a 17-1 vote), conclusively rejecting his plan to leave it to the already stressed Milwaukee Police Department to provide law enforcement services in Milwaukee County parks. Although Abele tried to sell this idea as good public policy, the board saw it for what it was: a giveaway of county tax dollars.

When Abele unveiled his snake oil sales pitch (which was crafted in a back room huddle with Mayor Tom Barrett and Chief Ed Flynn), that proposed the transfer of \$1.2 million from county taxpayers to Barrett's budget, Abele stated, "This budget...improves public safety." Chris Abele has nothing but disdain for law enforcement, and suburban taxpayers do not want to fund City of Milwaukee services while leaving the county parks in their own jurisdictions inadequately funded.

County Executive Abele's proposal this year for a reduction of 54 sheriff's deputy positions follows a budget that last year cut \$11 million from public safety and laid off 48 sheriff's deputies. He calls sheriff patrols at Mitchell International Airport a waste, but wants to fund city of Milwaukee police patrols for the same activity. In fact, Chris Abele's plan to pay MPD to patrol the lakefront and other county parks was nothing more than raw politics and a chance to use county tax dollars to cover more than \$1 million of overtime in Tom Barrett's budget. The fact that it was being sold as an enhancement to safety in our parks in a year in which MPD cops are being asked to take mandatory furlough days exposed his hypocrisy.

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I appreciate the County Board's ability to withstand the pressure exerted by the echo chamber known as the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's editorial board. Just last week the editorial board again proclaimed Abele's willingness to sacrifice public safety as "creative and cost-efficient," adding that it, "...would have maintained public safety in the parks at less cost to taxpayers." This editorial board never backed former county executive Scott Walker's tax levy freeze budgets, and those budgets were public safety supportive. In fact, they said Walker's tax levy freeze budgets hurt the poor and minorities.

I take a back seat to no one in this town in my diligence in controlling costs by eliminating the often-rampant waste, fraud and abuse in government-run operations. I get no support in that effort from the Journal Sentinel editorial board.

This public safety issue was never about cost, it was always about petty politics played by Abele. Thankfully, the county board saw through the propaganda of promised "efficiencies" and "increased collaboration" and rejected this plan. The board recognized that Chris Abele intended to raid the wallets of the suburbs to help Tom Barrett pay his cops to patrol where they are most needed: in neighborhoods, focusing on violent street crime, burglaries and other quality of life issues.

Abele needs to stop acting like the vice-mayor of the city of Milwaukee and start looking out for the interests of the entire county.

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