

Privileged to Serve

Moving Milwaukee County FORWARD Together



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THE OFFICIAL E-NEWSLETTER FROM SUPERVISOR STEVE F. TAYLOR



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Dear Friends and neighbors,

I have been fascinated with politics since a very young age. In grade school I would stare at the oval pictures of the presidents that hung above the chalkboard, and I would ask my mom to get books on them from our local library. I went to college knowing I wanted to be a public servant, and at the age of 21 I was elected to the City Council in La Crosse, Wisconsin. I have been extremely privileged to be able to do what I love for half of my life.

My frustrations with my representative and the lack of funding in our area led me to enter the race for Milwaukee County Board in 2012. At that time, I was very critical of the body that I was hoping to join. Once elected and sworn in, I quickly learned that my colleagues were decent men and women who cared about the people they represented and for the county they served. The only problem was they weren't Republicans and did not agree with me philosophically. So I had two choices, I could either attack them at every turn or I could try to build relationships and "cross the aisle."

I knew from experience that the only way to get things done was to work together and so I did. I did not run to simply add a title to the front of my name or warm a chair. I wanted to accomplish something for the residents and municipalities I represented. Unfortunately, this opened me to criticism and ultimately led to political attacks against me by some in the local Republican Party. It also resulted in political opposition from the far right instead of the left, which I expected. This was not supposed to be a partisan job, so I didn't feel the need to pass a political purity test.

Like everything I have done in my life, I want to address some things head on. I don't know about you, but I find it funny that I was criticized by my opponent who said I had a difficult time getting along with others and at same time was saying that I worked too closely with my colleagues. Which is it?? I'll let you decide for yourself. Note: on both occasions after being sworn in as your County Supervisor, I was chosen by my peers to be 2nd Vice Chairman and a member of county leadership.

Campaigns can be ugly; however, at the local level there has always been some degree of civility. This race was not the case as County Executive Chris Abele dumped nearly one million dollars into county board races, including mine that surpassed \$150,000.

For those who live in my district, they received 13 mailings along with over \$30,000 worth of extensive online advertising. Abele's goal was simple - mislead, misrepresent, distort, smear and lie. Do everything that could be done to distort my record and assassinate my character, including dredging up events that occurred 20 years ago and making it appear as though they were occurring now, and at the end of the day it worked. Unfortunately, in today's society, the person with the most money usually gets the outcome they want.

The result of this election was not as I had hoped, but I am very proud of what was accomplished during my term. When elected, not one of the county roads in my district was on the five-year capital plan and they were all in desperate need of reconstruction. Now, when you enjoy a smooth drive on North Cape, St. Martins, Old Ryan, 13th, 68th and 76th Streets, you'll know it was because of the promises I made to you. When funding for Hales Corners Pool improvements was eliminated from the budget, I pushed through an amendment that replaced those funds and ensured that the pool would be open for the next generation of children. I was fortunate to use that pool as a child and it was important to me that your children and grandchildren have the same opportunity. Boerner Botanical Gardens and Wehr Nature Center were the subject of proposed cuts made by the County Executive. Each time, I not only fought back but I directed more funding to those natural amenities.

The way to solve our fiscal challenges is through a tax base increase, eliminating county assets that are liabilities, economic development and job creation, which all go hand in hand. That is why as Chairman of the Economic and Community Development Committee, I shepherded projects like Ballpark Commons in Franklin that is turning a landfill into a \$130 million sports, recreation and entertainment district. At what turned out to be my last Board meeting, we approved a land swap in Oak Creek that I worked on for a year; resulting in, 1,500 family sustaining jobs, \$90 million dollars in property tax base, and protection of a critical environmental corridor, as well as the creation of a new county park.

There is an ongoing struggle when it comes to the vision of Milwaukee County. We have a County Executive who wants to cut programs to seniors, homeless shelters and public transportation. On top of that he wants to raise the wheel tax and charge fees for parking in your county parks. His answer always seems to be tax, tax, tax or cut vital services that our most vulnerable residents need. This is not only fiscally unsustainable, it is morally wrong.

I have always believed, in the end, each of us will be measured by how we live our lives and whether the good we have done outweighs the bad. I am very comfortable with the way I have lived mine these past 20 years and especially as your County Supervisor for the last six years. Serving you has been a great honor that I will fondly look back on. I have built friendships that will last a lifetime and I've experienced support from many of you that will never be forgotten.

I am undecided what the next chapter in my life will be, but you can bet it will be brighter and bolder and maybe a little louder. I will continue to keep a watchful eye on Milwaukee County and those who attempt to lead it. I will probably post a bit more on Twitter and Facebook, some talk radio and blogging, and speak out on the issues that I care about the most. The great thing about politics is that there is always another election . . . and 2020 is right around the corner. All My Best!!

