

The League of Women Voters began a study of County Government in the 1920's and since that time has reviewed and adopted various positions which strengthen county government. The League has supported removal of the uniformity requirement for counties allowing limited home rule powers. We have supported smaller county boards apportioned by population as well as establishment of a county executive or administrator. We believe a county can select the administrative model that best suits its needs and population. There has been no change in our support for strengthened county government.

The recently passed Act 14 transferred some board functions and/or created new authority to the county executive (such as ability to establish any new departments, call special meetings, authorized collective bargaining for all county employees etc.) The responsibilities of the county board still require approval of the entire county budget which includes transportation, courts, parks etc., approval of certain leases, purchases, and contracts, oversight of certain facilities and other obligations.

The new law changed board terms to two years instead of four, removed benefits and limits the county board costs to .4 % of the county budget. These are not going to change...they are part of the law. The ONLY input allowed citizens of Milwaukee County is whether the salary of a County Supervisor should be no more than the annual per capita income of the county (currently \$24,051) with a higher percent given to the County Board Chair and the Finance Committee Chair.

As in any offer of "cheaper is better" it is wise to look at the impact behind of the numbers.

- 1) Milwaukee County and other self-organized counties have the authority to set their own annual salary. What was the justification for limiting the salaries of county supervisors in Milwaukee County only and not placing a limit on self organized counties throughout the state?
- 2) Each Milwaukee County supervisor represents about 50,000 citizens, Dane Cty about 12,000, Waukesha about 16,000 and Brown about 10,000. How will the limiting of salaries and the overall staff budget for supervisors affect the opportunity for county citizens to advocate for adequate services? What effect will this have on encouraging candidates to campaign and run for the office of county supervisor every two years?
- 3) Act 14 makes changes removing county board administrative control to promote increased focus on policy input. By lowering salaries, and limiting staff and expenses, is this county board function weakened? And how does this affect local control?

Over the past several years money from the state and federal governments has been dwindling while the costs of performing county services have been increasing. The county board has been asked not just to do things well but to make choices about how to allocate scarce resources and to respond to situations faced by the poorest populations in the state regarding public transportation, the court system, mental health, parks. Will cutting the salary and benefits of the county board supervisors change this situation? Or will it make things even worse?

Does having less time, fewer resources and less experience help the county board make better decisions?

Is cheaper really better???