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CAVALIER JOHNSON
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

Proposed curtailment of Project Labor Agreements would hurt cities

Statement of Alderman Cavalier Johnson January 31, 2017

In Milwaukee and surrounding communities, we have seen an explosion of activity in terms of development. Whether it be the exciting projects occurring in downtown Milwaukee or new developments in places like Oak Creek and Wauwatosa, southeastern Wisconsin is experiencing a boom in well-paying construction work.

To that end, I was disappointed to learn that a proposed bill in the state legislature would curtail local governments' ability to enter into Project Labor Agreements (PLAs), tools which are used to make sure that projects are completed on-time and on-budget.

Many of the people who are building this region's future are members of the building and construction trades. The trades spend countless hours recruiting and training people who will become the backbone of our middle class here in Milwaukee and also contribute to stability in our neighborhoods. I fear that the proposed changes to PLAs could impact these vital training programs.

Furthermore, local governments have much more pressing issues on which we would embrace assistance from the legislature. In Milwaukee for instance, too many people who should not have firearms are able to access them too easily. There remains a spatial mismatch between where many people live and where many jobs are. Opioid deaths have surged in this and other parts of Wisconsin. And, this community continues to face a decline in state shared revenue. These are just a few issues where we would welcome help from the state.

As it relates to reaching into local government operations, it's my hope that the legislature will focus on the issues that are important to communities throughout Wisconsin rather than taking away tools that local governments have at their disposal to ensure that projects are completed on-time and without interruption or dispute.

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