



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

Chairman Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., 1st District

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Supervisors Take Action to Block Illegal Raises

MILWAUKEE – County Supervisors took [action](#) to force County Executive Abele and his administration to comply with state law on Thursday, after Abele refused to implement a legal ruling that found he had unlawfully awarded raises to high level staff and political appointees.

A circuit court judge's April [decision](#) reaffirmed the Milwaukee County Board's policymaking role and fiscal control over county governance, stating in part, "This Court finds that the decision to set or change employees' salaries is primarily a policy decision," and that "2013 Wisconsin Act 14 did not eliminate the Board's authority to provide, fix or change the compensation of county employees."

Milwaukee County Board Chairman Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., issued the following statement:

"The court found that the Abele administration exceeded their authority in granting the excessive pay, in violation of adopted County Board policy, and that Corporation Counsel's advice on this matter was incorrect. Abele needs to abide by that ruling and follow the law.

"County Executive Abele should have held off on awarding unilateral and unapproved raises when county supervisors warned him that the practice was unlawful. Instead, he's refused to comply with the law and with relevant Milwaukee County policies, and now he's flouting the law.

"Every day that passes without action, the Abele administration allows an unknown number of employees to continue to receive unapproved illegal compensation.

"Our [proposal](#), now adopted by the County Board, seeks to harmonize current compensation with the court decision in a manner that strikes an appropriate balance of power between legislative policy, budget control, and the implementation of day to day compensation"

"Some might argue that we could go further and seek repayment of the unlawfully awarded compensation, but at the very least we should put a stop to the improper practice that the Abele administration has engaged in for years."

The Abele administration has kept hidden the total amount of the raises it unlawfully awarded to political appointees and up to 300 unclassified staff since Abele began unilaterally implementing increased compensation that conflicts with limitations approved by the board of supervisors.

One department head secretly [received](#) an unlawful annual salary increase of nearly \$50,000 in 2015. The former head of the county's pension plan was awarded a unilateral raise of nearly \$11,000 in 2015 and another unlawful [raise](#) of \$5,228 in January, 2017.