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To: Joint Committee on Finance
From: Dan Thompson, Executive Director
League of Wisconsin Municipalities
Re: Budget Repair Bill

Last month, the League presented an eight-point proposal for reforming collective bargaining in cities and villages. I've attached a copy. The thrust of our proposal was to give local officials greater flexibility in controlling labor costs. Our hope was to implement these changes in a deliberate manner over time.

Gov. Walker warns us that we need to move very quickly because the upcoming state budget will include large shared revenue reductions, and local officials will need tools to offset these cuts.

If it is the intention of the Governor and the Legislature to require cities and villages to make sharp reductions in the wages and benefits of our employees, we have two requests:

First, if we are going to ask municipal employees to shoulder the impact of the state's budget deficit, then the burden should fall equally to all municipal employees, including police officers and fire fighters.

Second, municipal governments need to compete with the private sector for technical and professional employees. Please do not restrict the ability of local governments to offer competitive salaries and fringe benefits for engineers, accountants, attorneys, sewage treatment operators, water utility technicians, and the other professionals we need to run our communities effectively.

Thank you for considering our comments, and we urge you to review our eight-point proposal for reforming collective bargaining as you debate the budget repair bill.