

Thank you for holding this public hearing in Milwaukee County.

Believe me, I know how difficult it is to balance a significant budget shortfall. Last year, I inherited a \$51 million shortfall when I took over as the county executive. While that is not the same size as a \$3.2 million shortfall, it does represent a large percentage of our total property tax levy of \$219 million.

Knowing how difficult it is to balance such a sizable deficit, I am not here today to ask you to restore all of our cuts in state funding. My goal is to convince you not to make any more cuts in state aid to county government beyond the sizable cuts proposed in Governor Doyle's 2003/2005 state budget and to ask for your consideration in providing counties with flexibility with state mandated programs.

First, I should be clear that Governor Doyle's budget does make a significant cut in aid to Milwaukee County – including a cut in shared revenue this year. As you can see from the spread sheet that we presented to the committee, Milwaukee County will lose \$9.5 million this year and \$20.9 million in 2004.