

MILWAUKEE COUNTY FIRST

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MCF Statement Regarding Purported Budget Surplus for Milwaukee County

A year ago, Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker was sounding the alarm bell, claiming that Milwaukee County faced a \$15 million deficit. He kept this charade up until the summer when it was proven that such a deficit [did not exist](#) and Walker's claims were simply sensationalism.

This year, Walker is now claiming that there is an [estimated \\$8.9 million surplus](#) in an effort to aggrandize his self-reported budgetary prowess, a claim that even many of his supporters find dubious.

But it is questionable whether Walker has much to boast about, even if one trusts that the numbers are accurate this time. During his tenure as county executive, Milwaukee County has little to be proud of, including:

- More than \$300 million in unfunded pension liability on top of \$400 million in pension obligation bonds,
- [More than \\$200 million](#) in deferred maintenance and repairs for our parks system,
- A [20% cut in bus routes](#), which in turn made more than 40,000 jobs inaccessible by mass transit,
- A Behavioral Health Division that is so far out of control, that both patients and staff are frequently put in harm's way, and a potential loss [of tens of millions of dollars](#) in lost revenue,
- An [Income Maintenance Program](#) so poorly managed and severely understaffed that the State of Wisconsin had to take over control of it,
- Hundreds of county workers put into the unemployment line in favor of more expensive privatization,

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- The House of Correction so poorly managed it received failing marks from a federal audit until the Sheriff took it over from Walker,
- Milwaukee County's infrastructure, such as county roads and the Courthouse, are literally crumbling around us, and
- A current budget that was created with a severe deficit built into it.

"A budget surplus of that magnitude for Milwaukee County only indicates that its citizens were either over taxed or severely underserved, neither of which are points to be proud of," said Chris Liebenthal, Chair of Milwaukee County First.

"But when one takes in the hundreds of millions of dollars in bills Walker has already accrued for Milwaukee County tax payers, and the deplorable conditions of the county's once prized assets and services," continued Liebenthal, "For Walker to brag about a \$8 million surplus is like the captain of the H.M.S. Titanic bragging about finding a pair of water wings as his ship is about to go under the waves."

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