



Opposition of the Arena

As many of you already know, the State Legislature was asked this month to consider contributing funding to the Bucks for the construction of a new arena. I love the Bucks and am glad they will be staying in Milwaukee, but I could not support the final proposal. It was a bad deal for my neighbors in this Assembly District and for Milwaukee County.

There are many elements of this proposal that required consideration including the sentiments of Assembly District 19 voters, who I represent; the best use of our public resources and limited tax dollars; the kind of sports and entertainment options and overall community climate we want; and alternative arrangements that better balance the competing values.

In my opinion, the current proposal evolved into a very bad deal for Milwaukee County. Our public education, criminal justice system, environmental protection efforts, road maintenance, public transportation, and so many other public services all cry out for greater support, yet all of them are diminished by the subsidies and tax breaks that anchor this proposal.

Milwaukee County has had more than its fair share of recent struggles but is now being asked, via this proposal, to shoulder an additional \$80 million in legacy costs. That \$80 million will come from those in our community who need it the most creating further cuts in already badly squeezed services such as the county's mental healthcare system. Taking money from some of our community's most vulnerable and needy to pay for this arena for decades to come is wrong. I cannot and will not support such a proposition.

I listened carefully to neighbors, consulted with colleagues, and worked to get a better deal, one that would build the arena with consideration to the needs, interests, and values of our community and with less of a damaging impact to Milwaukee County. Although I was not able to get a better deal, I did my best and appreciate the amount of civic engagement this issue stimulated.