NEWS RELEASE

WAYNE COUNTY COMMISSION
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Palamara leads Commission effort against new tax

Wayne County Commissioner Joseph Palamara (D-Grosse Ile), today sponsored a resolution rejecting the placement of a new 1 mill county tax on the ballot to fund after school programs. The Commission supported rejecting the resolution by a 13-2 vote.

“In these unbelievably challenging times, when so many of our residents are struggling to make ends meet, now is not the time to put any new tax forward,” Palamara emphasized.

For comparison to this 1 mill request, the DIA, Zoo and county Parks millages are only .25 mill each. The new tax request proposed to raise an estimated $250 million over six years if passed. The proposal also included an implementing ordinance that the Commission found would violate its budgeting, contracting, legislative enacting and auditing authority.

The matter was before the Commission as a result of a petition drive and signature submission. On January 13, the Wayne County Election Commission voted not to place the proposal on the March 10 ballot because efforts had not been completed to determine if the signature requirement of almost 53,000 had been satisfied.

On February 21, the County Clerk found that despite submitting over 35,000 invalid signatures, the committee had met the signature requirement by a slim 132 margin, and sent the measure to the Commission for its review and consideration, as required by the County Charter-required legislation initiation process.
“Our Commission’s legal counsel and fiscal staff found that the petition contains violations of both state and county-charter law and would use up about 46 percent of our remaining unused county tax space if passed,” Palamara explained. “For me, being a leader means being in touch with the needs of the people and the realities of the times.

“The coronavirus pandemic changes the whole ballgame now and into the future. As this public health and economic crisis continues to unfold, we need to make sure that county resources are used to help our comeback,” Palamara continued. “As such, we just cannot expect to add to our residents’ tax burdens now. We just can’t!”

All downriver Commissioners voted to reject placing the proposed tax on the ballot.