



Legislative Committee Agenda

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-266-9200

December 1, 2020 - 10:30 a.m.

Council Chambers - Courthouse Room 300

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.021 and 13D.04 Subd. 3, the Chair of the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the declared state and local emergencies. Commissioners will participate by telephone or other electronic means. In addition, it may not be feasible to have any commissioner, staff, or members of the public present at the regular meeting location due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the declared emergencies. The meeting broadcast will be available online and linked via ramseycounty.us/boardmeetings. Members of the public and the media will be able to watch the public meeting live online.

ROLL CALL

1. Agenda of December 1, 2020 is Presented for Approval. [2020-556](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Approve the agenda of December 1, 2020.

2. Minutes from December 17, 2019 are Presented for Approval [2020-557](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Approve the December 17, 2019 Minutes.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

3. 2021 Ramsey County State Legislative Platform [2020-552](#)

Sponsors: Communications & Public Relations

1. Approve the 2021 Ramsey County State Legislative Platform.
2. Authorize County representatives to work with members of the Legislature and other interested parties to promote legislation reflective of the positions contained in the platform.

4. 2021 Ramsey County Federal Legislative Platform [2020-551](#)

Sponsors: Communications & Public Relations

1. Approve the 2021 Ramsey County Federal Legislative Platform.
2. Authorize County representatives to work with members of the Legislature and other interested parties to promote legislation reflective of the positions contained in the platform.

ADJOURNMENT



Legislative Committee

Request for Board Action

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-266-9200

Item Number: 2020-556

Meeting Date: 12/1/2020

Sponsor: County Manager's Office

Title

Agenda of December 1, 2020 is Presented for Approval.

Recommendation

Approve the agenda of December 1, 2020.

Legislative Committee

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2020-557

Meeting Date: 12/1/2020

Sponsor: County Manager's Office

Title

Minutes from December 17, 2019 are Presented for Approval

Recommendation

Approve the December 17, 2019 Minutes.

Attachments

1. December 17, 2019

The Legislative Committee of the Whole met in regular session at 11:05 a.m. with the following members present: Carter, Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Chair McGuire. Also present were Ryan O'Connor, County Manager, and Jeff Stephenson, Civil Division Director, Ramsey County Attorney's Office.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners	YES	NO	ABSENT	RECUSE
Carter, Toni	x			
Frethem, Nicole	x			
MatasCastillo, Trista	x			
McDonough, Jim	x			
McGuire, Mary Jo	x			
Ortega, Rafael	x			
Reinhardt, Victoria	x			

2. Agenda of December 17, 2019 Legislative Committee Meeting is Presented for Approval

VOTING

Motion by: Jim McDonough

Second by: Victoria Reinhardt

Commissioners	YES	NO	ABSENT	RECUSE
Carter, Toni	x			
Frethem, Nicole	x			
MatasCastillo, Trista	x			
McDonough, Jim	x			
McGuire, Mary Jo	x			
Ortega, Rafael	x			
Reinhardt, Victoria	x			

3. Minutes from the November 13, 2018 Legislative Committee are Presented for Approval

VOTING

Motion by: Trista MatasCastillo

Second by: Victoria Reinhardt

Commissioners	YES	NO	ABSENT	RECUSE
Carter, Toni	x			
Frethem, Nicole	x			
MatasCastillo, Trista	x			
McDonough, Jim	x			
McGuire, Mary Jo	x			
Ortega, Rafael	x			
Reinhardt, Victoria	x			

4. 2020 State Legislative Platform

The following additions (underlined>) and deletions (strikethroughs) were made to the State Legislative Platform and are noted below in the draft resolution . Discussion is available on archived video.

VOTING

Motion by: Jim McDonough

Second by: Toni Carter

Commissioners	YES	NO	ABSENT	RECUSE
Carter, Toni	x			
Frethem, Nicole	x			
MatasCastillo, Trista	x			
McDonough, Jim	x			
McGuire, Mary Jo	x			
Ortega, Rafael	x			
Reinhardt, Victoria	x			

Draft Resolution
(for Board approval on January 14, 2020)

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Legislative Committee of the Whole has reviewed positions for possible inclusion in the Ramsey County 2020 State Legislative Platform; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approves the Ramsey County 2020 State Legislative Platform inclusive of the legislative guiding principles, the statement of support for the named organizations, and the following items:

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Ramsey County Capital Investment Requests

1. Riversedge Deck, \$40 million
2. Ramsey and Washington County Recycling and Energy Center Next Generation Technology Upgrades, \$21 million
3. Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area, \$2.127 million
4. Interstate Highway 35E and County Road J Interchange, \$1.5 million
5. Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit Project, \$2.5 million
6. Riverview Corridor, \$2.5 million

Support of Other Capital Investment Requests

- Kellogg-Third Street Bridge Replacement, \$55 million, City of Saint Paul
- Twin Cities to Milwaukee/Chicago Second Train, \$10 million, MnDOT
- Gibbs Farm-Pathways to Dakota and Pioneer Life Program, \$7.13 million, Ramsey County Historical Society
- Lake Links Trail Connection, \$1.1 million

FUNDING AND POLICY PRIORITIES

Strong Families

- Support Families First Investments and Approach to Child Wellbeing
- Support the African American Family Preservation Act
- Mandate Court Appointment of Counsel for Eligible Parents and other Caretakers Involved in CHIPs Cases
- Support Child Care Licensing Practice Improvements
- Support State Compliance with Federal Child Care Provider Requirements
- Maximize the Use of All Available Child Care Subsidy Funds through Strategic Wait-List Changes
- Increase Funding for Affordable Housing and Housing Programs Focused on Specific Populations
- Create a Dedicated for the Development of Affordable Housing Across the State
- Expand Housing Support Demonstration Capacity to Include Seven Twin Cities Metro Counties
- Clarify Ambiguity and Correct Error in Child Support Reforms Adopted in 2016
- Update Basic Child Support Table
- Eliminate Interest on Past-Due Child Support
- Allow Discretion in Making Reports of Arrears to the Credit Bureau
- Provide Flexibility in the Collection of Child Support and Other Cost-of-Care Funds When a Child is in Foster Care

Health Care

- Continue to Improve Protect Health Care Access for All Residents
- Enhance Medicaid Asthma Care Services for Minnesota's Children and Their Families
- Increase Funding for the Minnesota Eligibility and Technology System (METS) Support Technology System Updates
- Support Changes to the County Cost Share for AMRTC and Community Behavioral Health Hospitals
- Develop Additional Community-Based Mental Health Placement Options and Services
- Revise the Civil Commitment Statute to Improve the Response to Defendants Who are Experiencing Mental Illness and Provide Funding for Competency Restoration

Safe Communities

- Probation Reform: Limit the Length of Probation with Exceptions for Certain Crimes
- Support Extension of Post-Conviction Relief Time Limits
- Clarify the Re-Establishment of Voting Rights Following Completion of Prison Time Served for Felonies
- Support Mandated Background Checks for All Firearm Purchases, ~~and~~ Support the Red-Flag Initiative and Renew the Federal Assault Weapons Ban
- Support the Uniform Collateral Consequences of Conviction Act

Achievement and Employment

- Support the Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)
- Support Regional Workforce Efforts
- SNAP Employment and Training Programs: Support Local Flexibility
- ~~Fund Ash Tree Wood Waste Processing Program~~

Transportation and Transit

- Support Statewide Transportation Funding
- Amend ~~Leased- Motor Vehicle Leased~~ Sales Tax to Include Ramsey and Hennepin Counties as Recipients
- Support MnDOT Local Bridge Replacement Program
- Fund the UP Railroad/BNSF Railway Grade Separation Project

General Government

- Update Ramsey County Governing Statute to Conform Community Corrections Administrative Structure with Other Counties
- Hold Counties Harmless for ~~State Department of Human Services Errors~~ that Require Repayment of Federal Funds or Result in the Loss of Budgeted Federal Program Funding
- Revise Eminent Domain Process
- Allow Use of Federal Identification Numbers in Lieu of Social Security Numbers on Homestead Classification Applications
- Allow Flexibility of Interest Rates for Contracts for Deed on Tax Forfeited Properties
- Balance Data Practices Laws to Foster Government Efficiency and Transparency
- Increase Funding for the Technology Systems Employed by Counties and the State to Support State-and Federal-Mandated Programs
- Require Access to Multi-Unit Housing for US Census Workers
- Fund Ash Tree Wood Waste Processing Program
- Support Efforts to Prevent and Clean Up Trichloroethylene (TCE) Contamination

Parks and Libraries

- Increase Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS) to \$17 million
- Support Library Construction and Remodeling Grants for Libraries

and Be It Further

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners authorizes county representatives to work with members of the Legislature and other interested parties to promote legislation reflective of the positions contained in the platform.

5. 2020 Federal Legislative Platform

Additions (underlines) and deletions (strikethroughs) to the Federal Legislative Platform were reviewed by Jennifer O'Rourke, Government Relations Director, and are noted below in the draft resolution. Discussion is available on archived video.

VOTING

Motion by: Toni Carter

Second by: Jim McDonough

Commissioners	YES	NO	ABSENT	RECUSE
Carter, Toni	x			
Frethem, Nicole	x			
MatasCastillo, Trista	x			
McDonough, Jim	x			
McGuire, Mary Jo	x			
Ortega, Rafael	x			
Reinhardt, Victoria	x			

Draft Resolution
(for Board approval on January 14, 2020)

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Legislative Committee of the Whole has reviewed positions for possible inclusion in the Ramsey County 2020 Federal Legislative Platform; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approves the Ramsey County 2020 Federal Legislative Platform including the statement of support for the named organization, and the items involving the following issues:

Infrastructure

- Passenger Rail
- Transportation Reauthorization
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

Community, Economic and Workforce Development

- Protect Basic Human Rights of Immigrants
- 2020 Census
- ~~Net Neutrality~~
- HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Tax Incentives for Development of Affordable Housing
- Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

Environment, Energy and Land Use

- Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LAWCON)
- Clean Water
- Recycling and Energy

Health and Human Services

- Social Services Block Grant Funding (SSBG)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- Medicaid Services Financing
- Mental Health
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Families First (Title IV-E)
- Firearm Regulation

and Be It Further

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners authorizes county representatives to work with members of the Legislature and other interested parties to promote legislation reflective of the positions contained in the platform.

Chair McGuire declared the meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Janet M. Guthrie, Chief Clerk – County Board

Legislative Committee

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2020-552

Meeting Date: 12/1/2020

Sponsor: Communications & Public Relations

Title

2021 Ramsey County State Legislative Platform

Recommendation

1. Approve the 2021 Ramsey County State Legislative Platform.
2. Authorize County representatives to work with members of the Legislature and other interested parties to promote legislation reflective of the positions contained in the platform.

Background

On November 10, 2020, the County Board held a workshop on the 2021 State Legislative Platform. Government Relations staff presented a proposed draft for discussion by the members of the Board. In preparation for the review of the proposed platform by the Legislative Committee of the Whole, Government Relations staff has included in the latest draft suggested changes from the commissioners and further input from department leadership staff. The 2021 State Legislative Platform draft includes Legislative Guiding Principles, Ramsey Funding and Policy Priorities, Bonding Proposals and a statement of support for platforms of the named organizations.

The Legislative Committee of the Whole reviews the draft Ramsey County State Legislative Platform and recommends its submittal to the County Board.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being ☒ Prosperity ☒ Opportunity ☒ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

The racial equity impacts of each item or position included in the draft of the 2021 State Legislative Platform were considered as part of the solicitation for proposed items and positions from service teams, departments and staff. Government Relations required that a form be completed for each proposed item, with a specific request for information regarding the impact of the proposed item on racial equity. Most of the proposed items have direct impact on racial equity, particularly those items that provide increased access to services or benefits specifically targeted to low-income individuals, families or communities, which disproportionately include more people of color and American Indians. These services or opportunities include improved access to health care, stable housing, childcare subsidies, employment opportunities and program and service refinements designed to positively engage cultural values. These efforts are reflected in the proposed top legislative priorities of the platform draft, which include housing stability and affordability and addressing racial disparities.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Government Relations attended several Ramsey County advisory committees and discussed the platform this summer and fall with other county organizations and advocacy groups. Additionally, department staff will hold town hall meetings in early December to hear first-hand community testimony regarding issues of importance

to Ramsey County communities and explain how to be involved in virtual sessions this year.

☒ Inform

☒ Consult

☒ Involve

☒ Collaborate

☒ Empower

Fiscal Impact

Many of positions in the state platform have financial implications and would require state and/or county appropriations, if legislation is enacted. The platform items that require county expenditures may do so in the form of a state-imposed maintenance of effort, a required local funding match (which is common for bonding projects), or through a new or revised operating cost. When there are implications for the current budget, necessary budget adjustments can be brought before the Board through a Request for Board Action; through adjustment to the current fiscal county budget; or through changes to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), depending on the specifics of the funding change.

County Manager Comments

The Legislative Committee of the Whole recommends the final State Legislative Platform to the County Board for approval. County Board action is required to establish legislative positions and priorities.

Last Previous Action

On November 10th, a County Board workshop was held on the State Legislative Platform

Attachments

1. 2021 State Legislative Platform



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2021 STATE PLATFORM



RAMSEY COUNTY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Resilience: Building Capacity to Respond,
Adapt and Thrive Under Changing Conditions

Residents First: Effective, Efficient and Accessible Operations

Advancing Racial and Health Equity and Shared Community Power

Aligning Justice System Outcomes with Community Values

Advancing a Holistic Approach to Strengthen Families

Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion

Stability Starts with a Place to Call Home

Talent Attraction, Retention and Promotion

LEARN MORE ramseycounty.us/StrategicPriorities

LEGISLATIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These legislative guiding principles provide a foundation for the specific initiatives and support items that are included in the 2021 State Legislative platform. In a field as dynamic as the legislative session, these basic tenets inform Ramsey County's response to legislative proposals as they are introduced and move through the process.

RESIDENTS-FIRST FOCUS

- Prioritize support for legislative proposals that clearly improve how government works with and serves Ramsey County residents.
- Evaluate the impact of legislative proposals on residents and provide opportunities for affected communities to publicly discuss and influence legislation.

RESPONSIBLE, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

- Communicate openly with the public and operate transparently.
- Observe good data practices to protect individual privacy and provide access to public data.
- Equalize access to government resources, opportunity and services across all communities.
- Respond proactively to address the needs of vulnerable children and adults and at-risk families who are experiencing instability and difficulty in meeting basic needs.
- Tend to ongoing maintenance and planning for future infrastructure needs.
- Advance information/data technology and ongoing updates that support program integrity and efficient service delivery.
- Increase citizen access to the polls and voting participation.
- Engage in good stewardship of natural resources.

LEGISLATIVE TOP PRIORITIES

- ✓ Funding Ramsey County's COVID public health emergency response, economic recovery and waivers
- ✓ Investing in housing stability—affordability and homelessness
- ✓ Addressing racial disparities in out-of-home displacements
- ✓ Funding transportation, including new revenues for transit, roads and bridges.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT REQUESTS

RAMSEY COUNTY BONDING REQUESTS

Riversedge Deck	\$40M
Rush Line Bus	
Rapid Transit	\$2.5M
Riverview Corridor	\$2.5M

SUPPORT OTHER BONDING REQUESTS

Twin Cities to Milwaukee/Chicago Second Train, MnDOT	\$10M
Gibbs Farm-Pathways to Dakota and Pioneer Life Program Extension, Ramsey County Historical Society	\$7.13M

RESPONSIBLE, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT *CONT.*

- Encourage inter-governmental collaboration built on the goals of improving performance, increasing efficiencies and building trust across programs, governmental agencies and communities.
- Support local authority to define local priorities.

STABLE, SUFFICIENT FUNDING

- Allocate adequate state funding to counties to carry out state mandates.
- Distribute funding equitably, based on fair and practical distribution formulas.
- Acknowledge county costs for existing or new state mandates.
- Support county innovations in the delivery of mandated service when efficiencies can be gained.
- Respect local government control of their resources and budgetary processes.
- Expend funds for the purposes for which they are collected or allocated.

PRACTICE-BASED POLICY

- Invest in practice-based policies that include ongoing assessment and adjustments to improve effectiveness of services and to save tax dollars.
- Emphasize prevention and early intervention.
- Promote stable families, safe neighborhoods, public safety, health and wellness by engaging individual and community strength.
- Foster economic development, broad access to education and training, and growth of living-wage jobs.
- Pursue policy that is not impinged by excessive, unnecessary regulation.



Racial and Health Equity

Ramsey County supports deconstructing systemic and organizational barriers to create fairer, more inclusive government.

INCREASED HEALTHCARE ACCESS (MF)

- Continue to preserve coverage for dependents up to age 26, prohibit the denial of coverage for preexisting conditions and the use of lifetime caps for coverage.
- Address racial disparities in healthcare access, quality and outcomes.
- Enhance Medicaid asthma services for children and their families by providing home assessment, allergen-reducing equipment and parental education.
- Increase METS funding to develop needed technological improvements that help county financial aid workers address eligibility updates, increased demands for services and the addition of state-mandated data matching activities.

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PLACEMENTS (MF)

- Develop additional community-based mental health placement options and services to shorten stays in state facilities and reduce costs after inpatient care is no longer necessary.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (JCO)

- Support the ratification of the ERA to bolster pay equity, domestic violence laws and pregnancy discrimination protections, among other equity goals.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM (MF)

- Support POCI Caucus legislation that further reform the investigation and prosecution of officer-involved deaths and wrongful actions; increases police accountability and transparency; raises standards of conduct and supports officer excellence; partners officers with the communities they serve; repairs and builds community trust and enhances community-centered public safety.

COVID-19 RESPONSE SUPPORT (MF)

- Support funding resources directed to COVID-19 response, including, but not limited to, community education and outreach, case investigation and contact tracing, testing, delivery of essential services, and distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available.



Residents First

Ramsey County supports improvements in service delivery and facilities, with an emphasis on engaging residents and employees, process efficiency, innovative technology and accessibility.

DATA PRACTICE AND PRIVACY REFORMS (JCO)

- Maintain flexibility in local governments' data retention schedules and reporting requirements to avoid overwhelming local technical capabilities.
- Consider local costs and improved public access when considering data practice updates.
- Address the use of intentionally disruptive and expensive data requests that provide little or no public benefit.

EMINENT DOMAIN REVISIONS (JCO)

- ~~Extend the required filing period for eminent domain valuation challenges to 45 days to give counties the opportunity to amend offers and promote settlements while reducing litigation costs.~~
- ~~Tie interest rates for eminent domain awards to the US Treasury Bill secondary market and establish parameters for attorney's fees to further reduce public costs.~~

HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS (MF)

- Hold counties harmless for DHS overpayment of approximately \$9M in Medicaid funds for chemical health services.
- Ensure state compliance with federal background check requirements ~~for staff at childcare facilities that endanger Title IV-E reimbursements.~~
- Continue health and human services waivers that demonstrate administrative efficiency and improve outcomes and service delivery.
- Support the modernization of human services programs, processes, and technology to maintain and improve effectiveness and sustainability.
- Support a health care eligibility system that serves as a sustainable platform for performing health care functions and fully integrates with other health and human services technology systems.

FUNDING FOR LIBRARIES (JCO)

- Increase Regional Library Basic System Support to \$17M to enhance free access to online digital resources and database services for Ramsey County Residents.
- Support Library Construction and Remodeling grants to help fund safety and construction and renovations at the Ramsey County libraries. ~~Library in Maplewood.~~
- Maintain Arts & Cultural Heritage Legacy funding for regional public library systems to support arts, arts education, and arts access, and to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage.

A Holistic Approach to Strengthening Families

Ramsey County supports listening to families' needs, understanding needs and providing non-traditional services and opportunities that promote wellbeing for infants, children, youth and their families.

AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY PRESERVATION ACT (MF)

- Support AAFPA legislation encouraging county case management and support services to accommodate cultural differences, address challenges and build on strengths to remedy the disproportionate placements of children of color into foster care and other out-of-home displacements.

FAMILIES FIRST (MF)

- Support Families First legislation allowing states and counties to use federal Title IV-E funds to focus child protection efforts on engaging families, building support networks and providing culturally informed services that help avoid compounding the trauma out-of-home placements often cause.

COURT-APPOINTED COUNSEL FOR CHIPS CASES (MF)

- Require judges to appoint counsel to all parents and caretakers involved in child protection cases to enhance the rights and stability of at-risk families during court proceedings.

CHILDCARE REFORMS (MF)

- Support childcare licensing practice improvements to simplify rules and promote improved relations between providers and regulators.
- Implement refinements to training, county liability insurance and other requirements to foster best practices in all childcare settings.
- Support state compliance with background study and minimum provider requirements from the Federal Child Care Block Grant of 2014 to prevent the loss of federal funding.
- Maximize the use of all available childcare subsidy funds through strategic waitlist changes that allow more families who have not used MFIP to access essential work-related support.

CHILD SUPPORT REFORMS (MF)

- Clarify ambiguities and errors in child support reforms adopted in 2016 to help families get their child support orders modified to fit new parenting expense adjustment statutes.
- Align language with the law's legislative intent related to one-parent support when a child is not living with either parent ~~with the law's legislative intent~~.
- Update child support guidelines to address inequities that require parents with lower incomes ~~obligators~~ to pay higher percentages of their earnings.
- Eliminate ~~Stop charging~~ interest on past-due child support to help keep paying obligators ~~parents from going deeper in debt and allow all payments to go directly to support the child, most of whom make less than \$10K/year, catch up and to simplify the automated child support enforcement system's calculation of fluctuating monthly payments.~~
- Allow discretion in ~~making reports of reporting~~ arrears to the Credit Bureau to prevent poor negative credit ratings from ~~exasperating adding to~~ families' financial ~~difficulties challenges~~ and untimely reporting from producing inaccuracies.
- Provide flexibility in ~~the collection of~~ collecting child support and other cost-of-care funds when a child is in foster care to ~~avoid intensified~~ reduce financial instability for families in crisis and ~~lower decrease~~ collection costs.



Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion

Ramsey County supports strategies that advance economic competitiveness and inclusiveness by creating greater prosperity and opportunity for all.

STATE-LOCAL FISCAL PARTNERSHIP (JCO)

- Maintain County Program Aid (CPA) with indexing funding and increasing the base appropriation after the COVID-19 economic recovery.
- Consider a 2021 omnibus bonding bill that addresses the backlog of the state's growing public infrastructure's needs.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENTS (JCO)

- Support efforts to align local, regional and statewide investments for workforce development training programs to ensure the unique needs of businesses are met while supporting job seekers with career pathways needed to obtain family sustaining wage and benefits. ~~that supply the diverse, skilled workforce needed to successfully compete in the global marketplace.~~
- Address existing economic, racial and gender disparities, especially among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color ~~and Native~~ communities, by coupling training and education with equity efforts in housing, transportation, childcare and other stabilizing factors.
- Dedicate sufficient adequate, ongoing and predictable state funding to provide workforce programming targeted to those who are underemployed, under-employed, or under-represented in the workforce as a means to reduce disparities and to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce. ~~leverage the state's active employer leadership and harness state and local workforce efforts.~~

FLEXIBILITY FOR SNAP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS (MF)

- Make participation in SNAP Education and Training Programs voluntary so that local programs can strategically match these vital support services to specific participants.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT FUNDING (JCO)

- Support statewide transportation funding that adequately invests in the long-term sustainability of local communities and addresses deferred basic maintenance, safety concerns, mounting congestion and missed economic growth opportunities for businesses and commuters.
- Amend the Motor Vehicle Leased Sales Tax to include Ramsey and Hennepin Counties as recipients so revenues can be spent in the metro-area counties where most funds are collected.
- Invest in MnDOT's Local Bridge Replacement and Local Road Improvement Programs to fund the replacement, rehabilitation or removal of deficient bridges on the local road systems and for the construction or reconstruction of local roads.
- Support the UP Railroad/BNSF Railway Grade Separation project adjacent to Westminster Junction to the east of downtown Saint Paul, which has been identified as a critical junction for addressing regional rail line congestion.

RIVERSEDEGE DECK

- Riversedge is an innovation public-private project revitalizing the historic riverfront and expanding public access to the Mississippi River. Ramsey County seeks \$40 million in the state's bonding bill for design and construction of a land bridge extension of public realm space over Shepard Road and the adjacent railway extending downtown Saint Paul directly to the river and doubling the usable area of the site.



Justice System Outcomes

Ramsey County supports policies that align justice system transformation with state and community values.

CIVIL COMMITMENT AND COMPETENCY REFORMS (MF)

- Make civil commitment statute more responsive to defendants experiencing mental illness and provide funding for competency restoration to ensure those who are not civilly committed are referred to mental health services and those who are can transfer to state facilities in a timely manner.

PROBATION REFORMS (MF)

- Cap probation lengths to five years or similar outcome-based time limits to address racial disparities and give offenders the best shot at positive community and family involvement while improving public safety and saving taxpayer dollars.

EXTENSION OF POST-CONVICTION RELIEF (MF)

- Extend the current two-year post-conviction relief time limit for immigrants who face deportation proceedings or are otherwise unable to apply for immigration benefits due to improper, defective or outdated misdemeanor convictions.

FELON VOTING RIGHTS (MF)

- Clarify the reestablishment of voting rights for felons who have served their time and are not living, working and paying taxes in their home communities so they do not have to complete extensive probationary periods before they are able to vote.

GUN SAFETY (MF)

- Support mandated background checks for all firearm purchases to reduce firearm-related crime.
- Provide a legal means for families and others to initiate the temporary seizure of firearms from an individual who is exhibiting erratic and violent behavior.

UNIFORM COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES OF CONVICTION ACT (MF)

- Support legislation that gives those who have become permanently or temporarily ineligible for some licenses, employment or housing a means to apply for a restoration of their rights and notifies individuals when they are criminally charged, and again when they are sentenced and released, about the sanctions that apply to them.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS STATUTORY CLEAN-UP (MF)

- Update Ramsey County governing statute to conform its community corrections administrative structure with other counties and give the county sole authority over its corrections department while acknowledging its continued collaboration with district courts.

FINES & FEES (MF)

- Increase flexibility to waive fines and fees charged in the criminal justice system. Remove the requirement to suspend drivers' licenses for failure to pay.

CASH BAIL REFORM (MF)

- Eliminate harm to community caused by the cash bail system by allowing the use of a risk assessment tool to release individuals back into the community if they are determined not to be a risk to society.

AUTOMATIC EXPUNGEMENTS (MF)


- Centralize and automate the process of sealing criminal records for low-level felonies and lesser crimes after the waiting periods in the expungement statute. Criminal records and the collateral consequences that follow long after people have fulfilled their obligations to the justice system serve as barriers to jobs, housing, education and more, preventing people from serving as productive members of our community.

PROSECUTOR-INITIATED RESENTENCING (MF)

- Enable prosecutors to initiate a motion to the court to reduce a person's sentence based upon their success in programming, abiding by conditions of supervised release, furthering their rehabilitation, and/or other factors that have subsequently reduced the person's risk for recidivism or indicate that a sentence reduction is in the interest of justice.

EXTENDED JUVENILE JURISDICTION (EJJ)

- Support legislation requiring the Department of Corrections and probation offices to collect and report statistics related to the number of individuals designated EJJ, the demographics of those individuals, and the outcomes of individuals designated EJJ.



Housing Stability

Ramsey County supports programs that provide access to safe, healthy, stable and accessible housing options for all residents.

AFFORDABLE AND STABLE HOUSING (JCO)

- Increase funding for affordable housing and housing programs focused on specific populations in need of additional assistance, including those experiencing mental illness, or other disabilities, individuals with criminal records, large families, veterans and those who are homeless.
- Create a dedicated fund for the development of affordable housing that enrolls private investors into the production of affordable housing to benefit local businesses, creates jobs and contributes to the overall growth of the economy.
- Expand Housing Support Demonstration capacity to include all seven metro-area counties to increase access to Housing Support for traditional rental assistance and support services for people experiencing homelessness.

FEDERAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS FOR HOMESTEAD APPLICATIONS (JCO)

- Allow use of FINs in lieu of Social Security numbers on homestead classification applications to expand access to Minnesota's Property Tax Homestead Credit Refund.

INTEREST RATES ON TAX-FORFEITED PROPERTY (JCO)

- Allow flexible interest rates on contracts for deed on tax-forfeited properties to reduce barriers for low-income families interested in purchasing or repurchasing these properties and provide a low-barrier pathway to homeownership for those with more modest incomes.

EVICITION PROTECTIONS (JCO)

- Ramsey County supports creating a right to counsel for tenants in cases brought by landlords alleging breach of lease in public housing evictions, which tend to raise more complicated issues that are harder for tenants to address without a lawyer's help. Providing for legal representation will improve outcomes for tenants facing eviction and level the playing field for our most vulnerable residents as the landlord is always represented by an attorney paid for by Public Housing Authority funds.

RAMSEY COUNTY **SUPPORT OF OTHER POSITIONS**

In addition to the initiatives contained in this platform, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners generally supports the legislative recommendations of the local units of government within the county and organizations in which it holds membership, including, but not limited to:

- Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and its associated professional organizations, including:
 - Local Public Health Association of MN (LPHA).
 - Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA).
 - Minnesota Association of County Officers (MACO).
 - Minnesota Community Corrections Act Counties (MCCAC).
- Minnesota County Engineer Association (MCEA).
- Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board.
- Partnership on Waste and Energy.
- Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MWAD).
- Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers (AMEM).
- Minnesota Workforce Council Association (MWCA).
- Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA).
- Metropolitan Library Services Association (MLSA).

The county board may choose to take a different position on individual items within the platforms of these and other organizations whose platforms they generally support. The county board may also consider additional positions in response to issues that emerge during the legislative session.



RAMSEY COUNTY **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**



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Vision

A vibrant community where all are valued and thrive.

Mission

A county of excellence working with you to enhance our quality of life.

Goals



WELL-BEING

Strengthen individual, family and community health, safety and well-being

through effective safety-net services, innovative programming, prevention and early intervention, and environmental stewardship.



PROSPERITY

Cultivate economic prosperity and invest in neighborhoods with concentrated financial poverty

through proactive leadership and inclusive initiatives that engage all communities in decisions about our future.



OPPORTUNITY

Enhance access to opportunity and mobility for all residents and businesses

through connections to education, employment and economic development throughout our region.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Model fiscal accountability, transparency and strategic investments

through professional operations and financial management.

Information about how the county is pursuing its mission and goals is available in the county's strategic plan at ramseycounty.us/StrategicPlan

Information about performance measures related to the county's mission and goals is available in the county's Open Data Portal at opendata.ramseycounty.us



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS 250 Courthouse, 15 West Kellogg Blvd, Saint Paul, MN 55102

ramseycounty.us

Legislative Committee

Request for Board Action

Item Number: 2020-551

Meeting Date: 12/1/2020

Sponsor: Communications & Public Relations

Title

2021 Ramsey County Federal Legislative Platform

Recommendation

1. Approve the 2021 Ramsey County Federal Legislative Platform.
2. Authorize County representatives to work with members of the Legislature and other interested parties to promote legislation reflective of the positions contained in the platform.

Background

On November 10, the County Board held a workshop on the 2021 Federal Legislative Platform. Government Relations staff presented a proposed draft for discussion by the members of the board. In preparation for the review of the proposed platform by the Legislative Committee of the Whole, Government Relations staff has included in the latest draft suggested changes from the commissioners and further input from department leadership staff. The 2021 Federal Legislative Platform draft includes summaries of positions regarding appropriations, programs and policies of importance to Ramsey County.

The Legislative Committee of the Whole reviews the draft Ramsey County Federal Legislative Platform and recommends its submittal to the County Board.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being ☒ Prosperity ☒ Opportunity ☒ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

The racial equity impacts of each item or position included in the draft of the 2021 Federal Legislative Platform were considered as part of the solicitation for proposed items and positions from services teams, departments and staff. Government Relations required that a form be completed for each proposed item, with a specific request for information regarding the impact of the proposed item on racial equity. Most of the proposed items have direct impact on racial equity, particularly those items that provide increased access to services or benefits specifically targeted to low-income individuals, families or communities, which disproportionately include more people of color and American Indians. These services or opportunities include improved access to health care, stable housing, childcare subsidies, employment opportunities and program and service refinements designed to positively engage cultural values. These efforts are also reflected in the proposed top legislative priorities of the platform draft, which include housing stability and affordability.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Government Relations attended several Ramsey County advisory committees and discussed the platform this summer and fall with other county organizations and advocacy groups. Additionally, department staff is conducting town hall meetings in December to hear first-hand community testimony on issues of importance to Ramsey County communities and discuss ways to be involved at the Capitol in a virtual setting.

☒ Inform☒ Consult☒ Involve☒ Collaborate☒ Empower**Fiscal Impact**

Many of positions in the federal platform have financial implications and would require federal, state and/or county appropriations, if legislation is enacted. The platform items that require county expenditures may do so in the form of a state-imposed maintenance of effort, a required local funding match (which is common for capital improvement projects), or through a new or revised operating cost. When there are implications for the current budget, necessary budget adjustments can be brought before the Board via a Request for Board Action; through adjustment to the current county budget; or through changes to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), depending on the specifics of the funding change.

County Manager Comments

The Legislative Committee of the Whole recommends the final Federal Legislative Platform to the County Board for approval. County Board action is required to establish legislative positions and priorities.

Last Previous Action

On November 10, a County Board workshop was held on the Federal Legislative Platform.

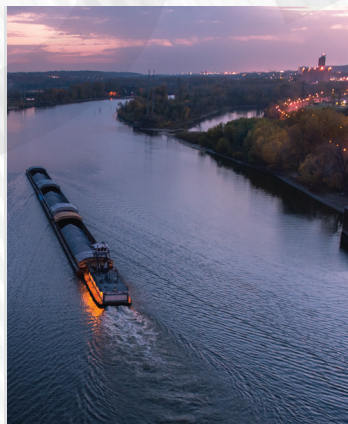
Attachments

1.2021 Federal Legislative Platform



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2021 **FEDERAL** PLATFORM



RAMSEY COUNTY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Resilience: Building Capacity to Respond,
Adapt and Thrive Under Changing Conditions

Residents First: Effective, Efficient and Accessible Operations

Advancing Racial and Health Equity and Shared Community Power

Aligning Justice System Outcomes with Community Values

Advancing a Holistic Approach to Strengthen Families

Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion

Stability Starts with a Place to Call Home

Talent Attraction, Retention and Promotion

LEARN MORE ramseycounty.us/StrategicPriorities

LEGISLATIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These legislative guiding principles provide a foundation for the specific initiatives and support items that are included in the 2021 Federal Legislative platform. In a field as dynamic as the legislative session, these basic tenets inform Ramsey County's response to legislative proposals as they are introduced and move through the process.

RESIDENTS-FIRST FOCUS

- Prioritize support for legislative proposals that clearly improve how government works with and serves Ramsey County residents.
- Evaluate the impact of legislative proposals on residents and provide opportunities for affected communities to publicly discuss and influence legislation.

RESPONSIBLE, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

- Communicate openly with the public and operate transparently.
- Observe good data practices to protect individual privacy and provide access to public data.
- Equalize access to government resources, opportunity and services across all communities.
- Respond proactively to address the needs of vulnerable children and adults and at-risk families who are experiencing instability and difficulty in meeting basic needs.
- Tend to ongoing maintenance and planning for future infrastructure needs.
- Advance information/data technology and ongoing updates that support program integrity and efficient service delivery.
- Increase citizen access to the polls and voting participation.
- Engage in good stewardship of natural resources.

FEDERAL PLATFORM **PRIORITIES**

- ✓ Fund Ramsey County's COVID-response and recovery needs
- ✓ PLACEHOLDER for OTHER HHS-related statement
- ✓ Investing in housing stability – affordability and homelessness.
- ✓ Support Ramsey County transportation and infrastructure needs.

RESPONSIBLE, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT CONT.

- Encourage inter-governmental collaboration built on the goals of improving performance, increasing efficiencies and building trust across programs, governmental agencies and communities.
- Support local authority to define local priorities.

STABLE, SUFFICIENT FUNDING

- Allocate adequate state funding to counties to carry out state mandates.
- Distribute funding equitably, based on fair and practical distribution formulas.
- Acknowledge county costs for existing or new state mandates.
- Support county innovations in the delivery of mandated service when efficiencies can be gained.
- Respect local government control of their resources and budgetary processes.
- Expend funds for the purposes for which they are collected or allocated.

PRACTICE-BASED POLICY

- Invest in practice-based policies that include ongoing assessment and adjustments to improve effectiveness of services and to save tax dollars.
- Emphasize prevention and early intervention.
- Promote stable families, safe neighborhoods, public safety, health and wellness by engaging individual and community strength.
- Foster economic development, broad access to education and training, and growth of living-wage jobs.
- Pursue policy that is not impinged by excessive, unnecessary regulation.



Racial and Health Equity

Ramsey County supports deconstructing systemic and organizational barriers to create fairer, more inclusive government.

PROTECT BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS (MF)

- Oppose increased efforts to discourage immigrants from accessing public assistance, such as housing, medical assistance, basic cash support and law enforcement protection. Inhibiting immigrants through fear or threat of consequence when they need services deprives them of access and denies them the opportunities to build stable lives for themselves, their families and to contribute to the communities in which they live. Further, permanent pathways for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Deferred Enforced Departures (DED), post-conviction relief for Southeast Asians in repatriation agreements and access to legal representation continue to be unresolved pressing issues for immigrants and the communities in which they live. Keeping families and children together and united as they undergo immigration proceedings.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (ACA) (MF)

- Protect essential provisions of the ACA, including coverage for pre-existing conditions, dependent coverage until age 26, no limits on annual/lifetime coverage, no-cost coverage for preventative care, and the mandate for individual coverage. Support the local-state-federal partnership structure for financing health care access and oppose measures that shift federal and state costs to counties. This law has proven effective in significantly expanding access to insurance to more low and moderate-income families and individuals. Ramsey County supports premium assistance to help keep the cost of insurance within reach.

ERA RATIFICATION (JCO)

- Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to provide equal protection under federal law to all people, regardless of gender. The ERA amendment would bolster pay equity, domestic violence laws and pregnancy discrimination protections, among other equity goals.

MEDICAID SERVICES FINANCING (MF)

- Enhance flexibility in the Medicaid program to support local care systems. Preserve the ability to match local funds and receive targeted supplemental payments and bolster the federal-state-local partnership structures for Medicaid services.



Resiliency

Ramsey County supports policies that are responsive to changing environmental, economic and social conditions.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND ACT (LAWCON) (MF)

- Provide continued funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In 1964, LAWCON was established to provide grants for outdoor recreation projects and to develop and redevelop parks. To date, Ramsey County has received nearly \$1 million from LAWCON for park projects.

CLEAN WATER (MF)

- Support investment and funding for infrastructure improvements relating to any contamination of water systems, as well as improved corrosion control, lead monitoring and public notification of contaminants in public drinking water. Support improvement of storm water, wastewater and drinking water infrastructure.

RECYCLING AND ENERGY (MF)

- Increase investments in sustainable and renewable energy. Environmental concerns, particularly climate change, bring waste generation, recycling and energy production into sharp focus. With international recycling markets stalling, federal efforts are necessary to incentivize industry to invest in innovative recycling practices and to spur communities and individuals to reduce waste and engage more intently in local and national recycling practices.

MENTAL HEALTH (MF)

- Support consistent funding for mental health services provided through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, as well as legislation that will increase Ramsey County's ability to provide local systems of care. Funding for the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) block grant should be funded at current levels or increased to rise with demand for services.



A Holistic Approach to Strengthening Families

Ramsey County supports listening to families' needs, understanding needs and providing non-traditional services and opportunities that promote wellbeing for infants, children, youth and their families.

SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT FUNDING (SSBG) (MF)

- Maintain or increase SSBG block grants at the current funding level. SSBG supports services such as adult protective services, special needs childcare, child welfare and child abuse prevention.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) (MF)

- Preserve the SNAP program to address hunger and food security issues for no and low-income residents. Given the recent efforts by the White House to eliminate or reduce eligibility through rule, it is increasingly important to voice strong support for services that address basic human needs, such as food security. SNAP provides food assistance to nearly 63,000 low-income families in Ramsey County. The SNAP Education and Training program, which provides support services (such as childcare and transportation) to SNAP-enrolled students, is a central component to helping families achieve and maintain economic stability.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) (MF)

- Increase investment in TANF. TANF funds are a major component of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), which provides financial assistance to nearly 18,000 low-income Ramsey County families. TANF also helps pay for childcare assistance for MFIP families and supports county employment services.

FAMILIES FIRST (TITLE IV-E) (MF)

- Implement Full funding and roll-out of the Families First promises to address long-standing issues with state and county child protection and foster care systems, including racial disparities of out-of-home placements. Enriching financial support for prevention, wrap-around services that are culturally attuned is essential to improvements in the nation's child protection and family support programs.

PARENTING TIME ORDERS (MF)

- Support legislation allowing the use of Title IV-D funds to get parenting time orders set for Recognition of Parentage (ROP) families similar to what is currently allowed for court-ordered paternity adjudication families. Currently County staff cannot talk about parenting time with ROP parents, except to give them resources to do this on their own, if they do the responsible thing and sign a Recognition of Parentage (ROP).



Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion

Ramsey County supports strategies that advance economic competitiveness and inclusiveness by creating greater prosperity and opportunity for all.

RIVERSEEDGE DECK (JCO)

- Rivesedge is an innovation public-private project revitalizing the historic riverfront and expanding public access to the Mississippi River. Ramsey County seeks \$40 million in the state's bonding bill for design and construction of a land bridge extension of public realm space over Shepard Road and the adjacent railway extending downtown Saint Paul directly to the river and doubling the usable area of the site.

PASSENGER RAIL (JCO)

- Support for passenger rail needs to be enhanced through increased funding to the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant program, and by authorizing the State of Good Repair grant program. Additionally, funding needs to be provided for rail improvements from Union Depot in Saint Paul, MN to Chicago, IL, which will enable a second daily passenger train for this corridor and for the completion of an environmental assessment of existing rails.

TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION (JCO)

- Provide reliable funding for planned transportation projects. Sustained transportation reauthorization will benefit the following Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Projects serving Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul:
 - Riverview Corridor: Between Union Depot and the Mall of America.
 - METRO Gold Line Corridor (Gateway): Between Union Depot and Woodbury.
 - Rush Line Corridor: Between Union Depot and White Bear Lake.
 - Red Rock Corridor: Between Union Depot and Hastings.
 - Second Daily Train: Between Union Depot and Chicago.
 - Bruce Vento Trail: From Buerkle Road to Highway 96.
- Other? (Checking with staff)

FIXING AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION (FAST) ACT

- Implement provisions in the FAST Act, reauthorizing highway and transit programs, as well as Amtrak, through 2021 2020, including:
 - Expanded funding options for programs under the Capital Investment Grant program (Core Capacity/Small Starts/Fixed Guideway Capital Projects).
 - Conversion of the Surface Transportation block grant program.
 - Modifications to the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program, making transit-oriented projects eligible to apply for TIFIA loans.
 - Fully fund capital improvement grants.



Justice System Outcomes

Ramsey County supports policies that align justice system transformation with state and community values.

FIREARM REGULATION (MF)

- Reinstatement of the Firearms Assault Weapons Ban to take a strong first step in addressing the epidemic number of mass shootings and other gun-related violence. When the 1994 ban sunset in 2004, a surge of automatic weapons shootings occurred, which has not subsided. The ban was effective and should be reinstated.

ICE DETENTION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC (MF)

- Support the immediate release of immigrants in ICE detention who do not pose a threat to public safety during the length of their removal proceedings, starting with individuals in high-risk categories such as people 60 and over, women who are pregnant, and people with chronic illnesses, compromised immune systems, or disabilities.
- Ensure ICE detention facilities currently holding detainees are adhering to CDC COVID-19 safety guidelines, are proving effective and timely testing, and offering health supports including medical treatment.



Housing Stability

Ramsey County supports programs that provide access to safe, healthy, stable and accessible housing options for all residents.

HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (JCO)

- Protect the HOME Program, which provides important funding for affordable housing units in market-rate multifamily new construction, foreclosed/forfeit property acquisition, rehabilitation and resale, and down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers throughout suburban Ramsey County cities. Ramsey County is part of a four-county consortium and currently receives approximately \$400,000 per year from HOME, a reduction of more than \$350,000 per year over the past 10 years.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) (JCO)

- Restore funding to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). CDBG supports community development programs for low- and moderate-income families in suburban Ramsey County. Ramsey County currently receives approximately \$1 million, down 50 percent from historic levels. The county supports the restoration of funding for the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant.

TAX INCENTIVES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING (JCO)

- Support passage of the Affordable Housing Improvement Act to increase the development of affordable housing nationwide by approximately 450,000 housing units. The bill provides incentives to developers by increasing the housing credit allocation by 50 percent, phased in over five years. It would also lock in the four percent LIHTC credit rate for financing with housing bonds and tax credits.

RAMSEY COUNTY **SUPPORT OF OTHER POSITIONS**

In addition to the recommendations contained in this platform, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners generally supports the legislative recommendations of the organizations in which it holds membership, including, but not limited to:

- The National Association of Counties (NACo) and its associated professional organizations.

The county board reserves the option to oppose individual items in the NACo platform that are contrary to the interests of the county.

DRAFT



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