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3 **RESOLUTION: Authorize Winnebago County to Request Increased Funding and**
4 **Oversight Reforms for Wisconsin’s Child Protective Services System**
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8 **TO THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

9 **WHEREAS**, the Wisconsin child welfare system is county-operated and state-supervised, except Milwaukee
10 County, where the system is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), Division of
11 Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS); and

12 **WHEREAS**, DCF provides insufficient funding to counties for the provision of child abuse and neglect
13 services including prevention, investigation, treatment, and out-of-home placement costs, though the state has
14 primary responsibility for compliance with federal requirements and shares liability for ensuring the system is meeting
15 its obligations to children and families in all 72 counties; and

16 **WHEREAS**, in recent years, the State of Wisconsin added numerous mandates and practice expectations
17 which increased county child protective services (CPS) workload and costs; and

18 **WHEREAS**, the opioid and methamphetamine epidemics have brought Wisconsin’s child welfare system to a
19 point of crisis, with increasing concern about the system’s ability to meet its obligations to children and families; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the capacity for counties to continue to bear the lion’s share of financial responsibility to address
21 this crisis has been exhausted, as rising county contributions to the CPS system have far outpaced increases to the
22 DCF Children and Family Aids allocation, and counties have used reserve funding to cover CPS expenses and
23 increase staffing; and

24 **WHEREAS**, maintaining sufficient resources for Wisconsin’s child welfare system is critical to secure the
25 safety and future of our most vulnerable children; and

26 **WHEREAS**, without a proportional increase in the DCF Children and Family Services allocation, the CPS
27 system has been stressed for over a decade causing caseloads for CPS workers to grow to unreasonable levels, and
28 contributing to high levels of staff turnover in some counties and an overrun of out-of-home care costs above what
29 counties can sustain within available resources; and

30 **WHEREAS**, Wisconsin’s CPS system leaves significant gaps in state-level oversight for all counties except
31 Milwaukee County, including the absence of caseload standards, no process for regular legislative evaluation and
32 prioritization of CPS needs, and the absence of a legislative committee that provides regular policy guidance
33 concerning CPS system issues such as adequate funding, performance, cost sharing, and long-term stability; and

34 **WHEREAS**, along with DMCPS; all eleven of Wisconsin’s peer states with county-administered CPS
35 systems have either adopted caseload standards for CPS caseworkers, completed thorough workload studies as a
36 basis of determining funding needs, or otherwise made significant recommendations for keeping CPS workloads
37 manageable; and

38 **WHEREAS**, the children within Wisconsin’s CPS system are too important to allow the current level of under
39 resourcing, oversight gaps, and disparity of attention while shifting the burden to property taxpayers.
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