

Safe to say that Wisconsin's largest cities are less than thrilled about the state's new collective bargaining law. Leaders of 39 cities with populations over ten thousand--including La Crosse--are represented by the League of Municipalities, Urban Alliance. In a letter to the legislature's Joint Committee on Finance, the group is asking the legislature to make changes to the law. First change requested is to have police and fire unions bound by the same dictates regarding pay and benefit contributions. The Urban Alliance says its members will find it difficult to balance budgets if police and fire compensation is off the table. Further, the letter claims rifts among employee groups are already occurring because fire and police have been left out of restrictions in collective bargaining agreements. The letter from the Urban Alliance also asks the legislature to include transit workers in those exempted from limits on collective bargaining so federal funding sources for transit will not be in danger. Finally, the alliance wants clarifying language regarding wage adjustments so cities have the freedom to increase wages for non-represented employees beyond the consumer price index.