



For Immediate Release
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FULLY FUNDING PUBLIC EDUCATION MEANS NO PRIVATE VOUCHER SCHOOL EXPANSION

MADISON- Tomorrow, the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) will take up education funding in Governor Walker's 2015-17 state budget. Since taking control of the Legislature and Governor's office, Republicans have enacted policies that have forced Wisconsin classrooms to absorb over \$1 billion in state aid reductions. In advance of the JFC taking up education funding, Rep. Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) released the following statement:

"Until recently, Wisconsin was known as a place where legislators from both sides of the aisle had always made public education a top priority. This once led to Wisconsin being a national leader in education, and one of the number one reasons why people came to our state to raise their families.

"While I have heard rumors of a proposed 'fix' in the budget, I don't see any sort of evidence that Republicans have reprioritized their treatment of public schools. Restoring this year's \$150 cut just brings Wisconsin classrooms back to zero. But that is only part of the picture.

"The budget also proposes increasing payments to private schools, and for the first time, public schools will have less state aid for every dollar that a new voucher student is given. While the Republicans may claim that public schools are a priority, they are currently floating an amendment to the Governor's budget would take as much as \$48 million from our public schools and give the money directly to private schools.

"It's not difficult to read between the lines and see where Republicans' true priorities lie. At a time when the state is not providing enough aid to the public schools it is constitutionally required to support, giving tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to private schools should be completely out of the question.

"Any sort of increase in funding to a second, private school system puts Wisconsin on an unsustainable path that doesn't just threaten our public schools, but many other priorities as well. Because public schools are prevented from making up for this lost aid through property taxes, this means additional cuts to school districts' budgets and less opportunity for Wisconsin's kids.

"We know what happens in states that don't invest in education, and it's not a pretty picture. Wisconsinites are demanding that the Republicans in the Legislature don't just restore one cut, but stop expanding the voucher program and give our public classrooms a raise. So when my colleagues across the aisle claim to fund or 'fix' Wisconsin's education, remind them that means no voucher expansion as well."

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