



# SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



**For Immediate Release**  
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## REPUBLICANS PASS ANTI-EDUCATION AGENDA

MADISON - This week, the Assembly met to debate a host of bills that would negatively impact public education. Bills on the slate included AB 581, a bill to drastically reduce teacher qualifications; AB 602, a bill to allow a failed Milwaukee accrediting agency to accredit schools throughout the state; and SB 615, a bill to cut even more from our public schools. Representative Sondy Pope (D-Cross Plains), the ranking Democratic member on the Assembly Committee on Education, released the following statement on the anti-education bills:

“Republicans’ actions on education this session are simply shocking. It baffles me that – from the budget to these bills – members of the majority continuously attacked our schools. Time and time again, they introduced steep cuts, they slashed our schools’ high standards, and they devalued our best current and potential educators, pushing them out of the state or teaching profession.

“These bills are more of the same. With today’s bill, SB 615, not only did Republicans lob another bomb at public schools’ fragile budgets, but they also chose to completely subvert the democratic process.

SB 615 was originally introduced as bill to provide Special Needs Scholarships, which received bipartisan support. However, the original intent of the bill was corrupted when Republican Speaker Robin Vos added an amendment that would fund unaccountable private voucher schools at the expense of 142 public school districts.

“This completely non-germane amendment was tacked onto the bill, and even though it had significant consequences, the public was neither informed about it nor allowed to voice their opinion. This sets a dangerous precedent on legislative business. If we are truly representatives of the people, shouldn’t the people’s will be the catalyst for our action?

“When word got out about Representative Vos’ amendment, my phone was ringing off the hook with concerns from educators, parents and students about the serious toll another cut to their schools would take. They were fiercely opposed to the amendment, and worried about the effect its passage could have on their children. Republicans didn’t consider their constituents when passing this bill – they didn’t even let their constituents voice their input on this proposal.

“We as legislators have a constitutional duty to provide fair and equal public education. In passing this bill, the majority party’s legislators have abandoned their constitutional duty, and any remaining allegiance to our schools.

“During debate today, Representative Vos called the previous funding choices a ‘glitch.’ After this year’s session, we can be certain of this: Republicans’ attack on education is not a glitch. It

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is a systematic, calculated attack on our public education, our teachers and worst of all, Wisconsin students.”

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