



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

April 22, 2011

GOV. SCOTT WALKER
Governor, State of Wisconsin
Rm 115 East, State Capitol
Madison WI 53707

SEN. ALBERTA DARLING
Co-Chair, Joint Finance Comm.
Rm 317 East, State Capitol
Madison WI 53707

REP. ROBIN VOS
Co-Chair, Joint Finance Comm.
Rm 309 East, State Capitol
Madison WI 53708

HAND-DELIVERED

To the Honorable Governor Walker, Senator Darling, and Representative Vos:

As members of the Black and Latino Caucus, and as this budget process nears the point of consideration of the provisions relating to expansion of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, we are writing to express to our concern with the Governor's proposals and state some common principles that can be used for limited and common sense expansion of the choice program in Milwaukee.

First, we reiterate that the accountability measures for schools, administrators, and teachers enacted in 2009 Act 28 should not be repealed or modified. These are common sense guidelines that ensure that public tax dollars are used for quality educational purposes.

In relation to the budget provisions currently proposed, we affirm these common principles:

- The WKCE should be required as a test in MPCP.
- Regarding income limits, income eligibility should be tied to the same eligibility for BadgerCare in Wisconsin. Should the level of BadgerCare eligibility fall below the current income guidelines for MPCP participation, then the current level should be maintained. It is common sense that the level of poverty that qualifies a family for healthcare should be the same as that which qualifies a family for the choice program, always intended to be for low-income persons.
- There needs to be codified and strengthened a bad-actor provision relating to administrators who have failed in previous schools settings in MPCP or elsewhere from entering the program with new proposals either under the own names or under the names of other people or entities.
- We must engage in a serious discussion about the optimum size of a school that will qualify for MPCP.

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Sen. Darling
Rep. Vos
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We look forward to our inclusion in the decision making process and consideration of our concerns in the budget deliberations. As stakeholders and elected officials in the community in which these changes will occur, we are concerned that outside forces and ideology will dominate this discussion. The entire educational ecosystem in Milwaukee and Milwaukee taxpayers deserve to be the driving force behind any expansion in MPCP.

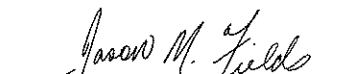
Sincerely,

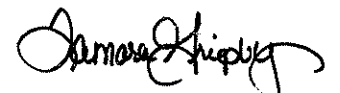

SPENCER COGGS
State Senator – 6th


LENA C. TAYLOR
State Senator – 4th

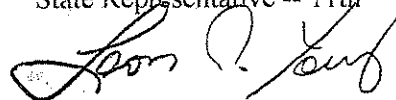

BARBARA TOLES
State Representative – 17th


ELIZABETH COGGS
State Representative – 10th


JASON FIELDS
State Representative -- 11th


TAMARA GRIGSBY
State Representative – 18th


ROBERT TURNER
State Representative – 61st


LEON YOUNG
State Representative -- 16th


JOCASTA ZAMARRIPA
State Representative – 8th

cc: Members, Joint Committee on Finance
Members, Assembly Committee on Education
Members, Senate Committee on Education