

American Federation for Children: Bi-partisan school choice bill passes Wisconsin Assembly

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The Wisconsin State Assembly followed the Senate's lead by passing, in bi-partisan fashion, a bill that increases accountability and enhances efficiencies in Wisconsin's school choice programs.

The legislation is a result of a yearlong collaborative effort between the Department of Public Instruction and school choice advocates.

The bill, mostly technical in nature, provides significant quality control measures that reduce the administrative burden and enhance accountability. Several notable provisions include:

- Background checks for all employees at voucher schools.
- Increased financial accountability requirements so the state can recover taxpayer funds from schools that close during the school year.
- Increased authority for DPI to punish or expel schools who make financial misrepresentations.
- A change in the financing mechanism for the special needs scholarship program so that public schools receive more funding.

"We would like to thank the authors Representative Kitchens (R) and Representative Fields (D) for sponsoring the bill in the Assembly," said Justin Moralez of the American Federation for Children. "We would also like to extend an additional thank you to all the Democrats who were able to put ideology aside and vote for what is best for the children," noted Moralez.

"It is disappointing that some Democrats still chose politics over children. The

choice program is clearly not going away and is increasingly popular in their districts. In fact, recent polling shows that as much as 42 percent of Democrats support the choice program statewide,” said Moralez.

The bill passed on a 67-30 margin with the support of 6 Democrats. The bill is expected to be signed by the Governor soon.