

Sen. Larson: Republicans Block Access to the American Dream for our Kids and Grandkids

Posted on Monday, Sep 18, 2017

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MADISON – The following is a statement from Senator Chris Larson regarding the Republican rejection of a brighter future for our kids through an amendment offered by Democrats in the 2017-19 state budget:

“How we choose to invest in our children is one of the most important and critical parts of our state budget. I strongly believe one of core pillars of what makes Wisconsin a great state is our dedication to a great education system, where every child has access to a quality education.

“It’s such a part of who we are that it’s actually in our state Constitution. Wisconsin must renew this value of supporting our local public schools, as it is crucial to strengthening our communities and state.

“The budget, crafted by the Republican majority, continues to shortchange our children. After nearly \$1 billion in historic cuts to the K-12 system, the Republican majority has chosen to continue their attack on our public schools by failing to make them whole. Wisconsin families count on us to do our job so that all of our children have the best education possible. At \$76 billion, the largest budget in state history, this anemic K-12 budget shortchanges the future of our kids and grandkids.

“The negative effects shown by this continued ‘values deficit’ in education go counter to Wisconsin’s proud heritage. For the first time in modern history,

Wisconsin has dropped below the national average for per-child funding. Rejecting our responsibility and constitutional commitment as a state to adequately fund our local schools to allow them to provide a quality education is a dangerous betrayal of a generational promise that has brought the opportunity for prosperity to our state. To make it worse, this budget also allows for a massive expansion of the unaccountable voucher program.

“We can and must do better for our kids. Under an amendment offered by Senate Democrats, every single one of our Wisconsin school districts would see a stronger investment, allowing them to ensure our kids reach their full potential and have a shot at the American Dream. Republican’s ignored our neighbors and reject this amendment. I hope they will come to their senses later during the budget debate and support our amendment that would provide real accountability and transparency in the private voucher program.”