

Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty: Statement on State Budget

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September 21, 2017 – Milwaukee, WI – The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL), a law & policy center in Milwaukee, commends the legislature and Governor Walker for including education reform policies in the 2017-2019 state budget. The budget, signed into law today, includes a major expansion of the Special Needs Scholarship Program, i.e. the state's special needs voucher program, by eliminating burdensome eligibility requirements. It also increases the eligibility of the statewide voucher program, the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program, from 185% (\$45,000 for family of four) to 220% (\$54,000 for family of four) of the federal poverty limit, as well as allowing public universities and colleges to authorize independent public charter schools. These reforms have proven to increase student achievement.

Below is a statement by WILL President Rick Esenberg:

“I commend Republicans in the legislature for expanding school choice in the budget and Governor Walker for signing the budget into law. There is no doubt that these reforms improve Wisconsin's K-12 school system. But there is still significant work to be done and the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty will continue to perform timely and comprehensive analysis to show policymakers and opinion leaders the way forward for education reform.”

This year, WILL has authored a number of timely school choice studies including how:

Rural and small town public schools are struggling academically and why vouchers may be the answer to their woes, The school voucher program in Milwaukee will generate nearly half a billion dollars in economic benefits, The Special Needs Scholarship Program can be fixed to give more parents access, and Independent public charter schools outperform traditional public schools in Milwaukee.