

Sen. Johnson: Republicans block historic investments in special education funding

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MADISON – Governor Evers and Lt. Governor Barnes went around the state seeking input on the priorities of Wisconsinites, a process that resulted in a bold ‘People’s Budget.’ Unfortunately, right out of the gate Republicans began a long list of missed opportunities, starting with the rejection of Medicaid expansion and continuing with slashing a historic investment in special education. Senator LaTonya Johnson – a member of the state’s budget-writing Joint Finance Committee – offered the following comments in regards to today’s state budget debate:

“Throughout this process, my Democratic colleagues and I proposed several opportunities to restore the necessary investments that were made in the People’s Budget, which would make sure every student has every opportunity to get ahead. Instead of standing with students, parents, and teachers who’ve asked for this investment, Senate Republicans decided to vote against a historic \$600 million increase in funding for special education.

“When the people of Wisconsin elected a longtime education leader, Tony Evers, to be our new governor, it was a clear rejection of the broken Republican status quo that underfunds schools and forces districts to rely on referenda year after year – a system that leaves many of our communities behind.

“We all know that education is key to lifting children out of poverty. As lawmakers,

we didn't get elected to choose which children get to thrive and which don't, yet the Republican plan cuts 84% of Governor Evers' special education budget. It is beyond disappointing that Republicans are choosing to play politics rather than working with Democrats to fulfill the needs of the children in their own communities.”

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