

Sen. Marklein, Rep. Born: Joint Committee on Finance continues to put kids first

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Madison.... The Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC), State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) and State Representative Mark Born (R-Beaver Dam) issued the following statement after the federal Department of Education (DOE) denied part of Wisconsin's plan for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Education Relief (ESSER) funds:

"The JFC and Republicans in the legislature continue to put kids first rather than play partisan political games. We all know that our kids need to be in school for in-person instruction—even DOE acknowledges that children were harmed by virtual learning and stresses the importance of in-person instruction. But the Biden and Evers administrations are putting politics over what is best for our kids.

This politically-motivated denial affects \$77 million of the total funding in the ESSER program, sending a strong, negative message to our schools. Fortunately, \$1.4 billion will be automatically distributed to schools while we continue to work on a plan to provide the remaining \$77 million to schools that prioritized in-person instruction when our kids needed it most.

The legislature sent our ESSER plan to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in May 2021. They sat on it for months while working behind the scenes with their political counterparts in Washington D.C. to find ways to deny our efforts to reward schools that did the hard work of educating our kids in person during a pandemic. DPI and the Biden administration have unnecessarily delayed this funding for our schools to play political games. It is shameful.

Our local school leaders, teachers, school boards, legislators and parents have been working very hard to do what is best for our kids, while government bureaucrats have been playing games with the funds that should be available to educate our kids. It's time to do what is right.”