

# Rep. Pope: Says over \$200 million in public school aid siphoned by voucher and independent charter schools

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## *Wisconsin Taxpayers Foot the Bill without Consent or Accountability*

MADISON, Wis. – A group of legislative Democrats introduced a package of bills that aim to add accountability and transparency to Wisconsin’s voucher programs. These include the Milwaukee (MPCP), Racine (RPCP) and Statewide (WPCP) Programs in addition to the Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP) and (2r) and (2x) independent charter schools.. A [recent memo](#) prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau shows that the these programs have cost local school districts \$202.2 million in aid reductions during the 2021-22 school year. In response, the authors released the following statement:

**“The voucher program has proliferated into a second competing school system that Wisconsin taxpayers can no longer afford. We introduced this package of bills in an attempt to curb this growth before the enrollment cap is totally lifted in the 2026-27 school year. As public schools face growing costs and new challenges, the legislature must refocus our priorities on creating better opportunities for all Wisconsin students.**

**“Property taxpayers should not have to foot the bill for religious educations for a chosen few, and the operators of these schools should**

**not be able to profit off of the hard work of Wisconsinites. These bills give the legislature the chance to do right by public school districts by increasing transparency and eliminating unnecessary competition for adequate funding.”**

The Democratic bill package includes provisions that would: cap enrollments in the MPCP, RPCP & WPCP and sunset the SNSP (LRB-0631/1), require that teachers in voucher programs schools be trained and licensed educators (LRB-0632/1), give taxpayers the referendum authority to approve aid diversions and property tax increases for voucher schools in the RPCP and WPCP (LRB-0633/1), and would limit payments to voucher schools to the lesser of the current statutory voucher payment or the tuition charged by the voucher school (LRB-0623/1).