

Sens. Larson, Smith and Johnson: GOP plan to dismantle public education would increase taxes by over \$577 million

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Madison WI – Today, the Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Education again refused direct calls for an in-person executive session to debate the merits of legislative measures brought before the committee for a vote. This marks the ninth time this session that Senator Alberta Darling has not allowed debate around legislation before a vote.

Today's paper ballot represents the broken ideology of the majority party, ever willing to pit parents against their children's schools, no matter the cost. Senators Chris Larson, Jeff Smith, and LaTonya Johnson offered this statement:

“Our communities are best served when the next generation is provided a fully-resourced, well-rounded education that supports our shared values in bettering the world around us. We stand opposed to Legislative Republicans’ assault on public education, and we stand opposed to the wasteful venture that this package represents.

“Ever the opportunists, GOP lawmakers have used this pandemic to co-opt parent frustrations by villainizing school boards, administrators, and teachers. They have done this with one goal in mind: breaking public education. With these pieces of legislation, Republicans have again proved to parents across Wisconsin that they are incapable of addressing the real, critical issues facing Wisconsin families.

“Instead of reinvesting state resources in data-driven programming within our

public schools and ending the decade-long austerity measures that have driven quality educators out of the profession, Republicans offered harmful and drastic changes to Wisconsin's K-12 schools. In addition to growing bureaucracy and creating chaos in our children's schools, these poor public policy decisions offered by Legislative Republicans are estimated to increase costs for property taxpayers by more than \$577 million in the first year of implementation.

"These tired, divide-and-conquer tactics consistently implemented by the majority party are on full display, but Wisconsin parents are not easily fooled. Our parents know that our public schools are the backbone of our communities and that their teachers are doing all they can for our kids. However, they are right to be frustrated by the actions of legislative Republicans, who have deliberately underfunded our schools, politicized the pandemic, and are trying to shift even more resources from public schools, directing them instead to unaccountable private voucher schools."