

Minocqua Brewing Company: Lawsuit filed challenging Wisconsin's school choice program as unconstitutional

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MINOCQUA, WI – In the most important legal challenge to Wisconsin's education financing system in decades, concerned citizens, parents, and taxpayers are questioning a system that will have far-reaching consequences for public education in Wisconsin.

The case filed today focuses on the funding of education through several state programs, including the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program, the Racine Parental Choice Program, the Special Needs Scholarship Program, and the Independent Charter School Program. This last school year, these programs cost Wisconsin taxpayers approximately \$568.5 million and have only served to weaken the state's public schools.

"The revenue limit and funding schemes for voucher school programs and independent charter schools violate the Wisconsin Constitution's Public-Purpose Requirement and the Uniform Taxation Clause," said Brian Potts, an attorney on the case. "This parasitic funding system is pushing public school districts into an ever worsening financial crisis, which is leading to what can only be described as a funding death spiral for public education."

At the core of the issue lies the voucher school financing system, which appears to be designed more to harm school districts than to support voucher programs. The impact of this financing scheme has been devastating to Wisconsin's school districts.

When a student enters the voucher program, their home district loses as much as

\$14,671 in state equalization aid. Unfortunately, the state only provides districts with anywhere from \$0 to \$8,000 in equalization aid per public school student. For example, every time one student from the Madison school district obtains funding to go to a private school, the state takes away the entire state aid provided to that school district for five public school students.

Consequently, the loss of students to voucher programs has a financially destructive effect on Wisconsin's schools. These laws, rather than promoting equitable education, are effectively penalizing public schools and their students.

As private school enrollment within a district grows, the average funding allocated to public school students in the same district declines, eventually dwindling to zero. This situation can be likened to a financial death spiral, where the mechanisms in place drain the financial resources intended for public education.

"The current school financing system not only fails to equitably distribute resources but also threatens the financial stability of public education in Wisconsin," according to Fred Melms, another attorney on the case. "It's imperative to address these issues to ensure that all students receive the support they need for a brighter future."

Also adding to the financial challenges faced by school districts is what's known as the "revenue limit," a legally prescribed cap on the amount of revenue that school districts can allocate to fund public education. This cap is imposed on local school districts, irrespective of their unique circumstances, the educational requirements of their students, or the community's vision for their district, all in violation of the Wisconsin Constitution.

This lawsuit promises to be a pivotal moment in the ongoing debate surrounding school choice, vouchers, and the future of public education in Wisconsin. The lawsuit is being funded by the Minocqua Brewing Company SuperPAC.

For more information on the lawsuit, please contact either:

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About Minocqua Brewing Company:

The Minocqua Brewing Company has become a strong progressive voice in Northern



Wisconsin, drawing thousands of tourists from across the country to our historic taproom in downtown Minocqua. More information is available at: MinocquaBrewingCompany.com