

Rep. Shelton: Pushes back on voucher school expansion

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MADISON – This morning the Assembly Committee on Education held a public hearing on one bill. Assembly Bill 305 would increase the per pupil payments in the parental choice and the Special Needs Scholarship Program and provide an increase in the school district revenue ceiling.

The Committee has not received a fiscal estimate on the short and long term financial impacts on Assembly Bill 305. Despite the speed of introduction to scheduling this hearing, advocates for public education spoke against this bill on its impact on our communities through school district aid deductions to the voucher program.

Representative Shelton (D - Green Bay) released the following statement:

“Supporting public education is the top priority I have in the Assembly. Wisconsin public schools serve all kids, regardless of disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, economic background, and personal needs. Every kid in Wisconsin deserves a fully funded, fully supported public school.

“Wisconsin parents overwhelmingly *choose* public schools because they know public schools educate and support the whole student. Wisconsin public schools unite us by building upon a shared commitment to common care and American democracy. Now more than ever, we must double down on our support of public schools and push back against efforts to funnel additional public money into private voucher schools that operate without measures of transparency or public accountability. By 2025, the cap on voucher enrollment in Wisconsin will cease to exist, and this bill provides a pathway to unmeasurable taxpayer fund transfers to private schools.

“AB 305 supports public education *only* at the cost of another investment in voucher spending expansion in a way that will hurt our kids. This voucher expansion will not be held to the same standards of accountability, transparency, and inclusion that our public schools are rightly held to. This expansion to voucher spending will exacerbate the differences between the two separate education systems in Wisconsin. Further, this bill passes the investments needed to make our public schools whole onto property taxpayers. We must support public education with proper and necessary investment.”