

Rep. Phelps: Urges opposition to bill targeting public school teachers

Posted on Thursday, Feb 19, 2026

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MADISON, WI – State Representative Christian Phelps (D-Eau Claire) spoke on the Assembly floor late Wednesday in opposition to Assembly Bill 795, which would require the Department of Public Instruction to publicly post information about investigations into educator conduct before reaching a final determination.

“Our teachers are human beings and working professionals, absolutely entitled to basic due process and dignity,” Phelps said.

The bill would require DPI to create a new public database detailing investigations that are not yet resolved, without providing additional funding for the work. According to Phelps, the proposal would “essentially turn allegations into permanent records, causing serious reputational harm to ordinary public school teachers in our communities.”

In remarks focused on Western Wisconsin, Phelps emphasized the role of public schools in rural communities and warned that the legislation would deepen distrust rather than improve safety.

“This bill...just doesn’t make any technical sense if its goal is student safety. It does make sense if its goal is a broader campaign to sow distrust between communities and educators.”

“If these bills were about protecting kids, Republicans wouldn’t be voting *for* them when they apply to public schools but *against* them when they apply to private schools – which, yes, has happened in our Education Committee.”

Phelps connected the proposal to long-term funding challenges facing public schools and argued that the Legislature, which has been controlled by Republicans

since 2011, is responsible for providing resources, not fearmongering.

“The project before us today is not just unhelpful, it is dangerous,” Phelps said. “If we continue down a path of distrust, fear, and public shaming, we will not strengthen our public schools. We will weaken them.”

Phelps concluded by urging colleagues to vote No:

“Western Wisconsin literally cannot afford that.”