

**Committee Name:**  
**Joint Committee on Finance – Budget Hearings (JCF\_BH)**

**Appointments**

99hr\_JCF\_BH\_Appoint\_pt00

**Clearinghouse Rules**

99hr\_JCF\_BH\_CRule\_99-

**Committee Hearings**

99hr\_JCF\_BH\_CH\_pt00

**Committee Reports**

99hr\_JCF\_BH\_CR\_pt00

**Executive Sessions**

99hr\_JCF\_BH\_ES\_pt00

**Hearing Records**

99hr\_ab0000

99hr\_sb0000

**Misc.**

99hr\_JCF\_BH\_\_Misc\_Education\_pt03c

**Record of Committee Proceedings**

99hr\_JCF\_BH\_RCP\_pt00

**K-12**

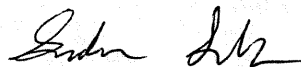
Written Testimony opposed to Revenue Caps  
Submitted by Gideon Sorokin, Sophomore at Madison  
West High.

I enjoy learning, and it has become increasingly hard to learn at my school. The reason is textbooks, simple ~~several hundred~~ <sup>hundred</sup> paged volumes. Some of my books are fairly new, the first books purchased since the implementation of budget caps, yet others range in age to almost thirty years.

A thirty year old ~~book~~ sitting in the stacks of a library do not deteriorate; yet a thirty year old book, used ~~that~~ one-hundred and eighty days a year tatter. They become hard to read and make it hard to learn. By having deteriorating textbooks, my learning experience is less enjoyable, I have to work harder to gain the same learning as was previously possible.

By having my textbooks in a deteriorated state, the result of limited budgets, learning is less fun.

Sincerely



Gideon Sorokin

Students United in Defense of Schools  
Opposing the QEO

Braden Smith  
5809 Bardlett Ln  
Madison, WI 53711  
(608) 273-3366

Please submit this into the record for Joint Finance Hearing 4/15/99

I want to thank the committee for giving SUDS the chance to present its case in opposition to an economic policy that affects the future of Wisconsin schools. As students, we are affected on a daily basis by the effects of the QEO. At Memorial I run track, am involved in band, participate in school supported community activities, and daily receive my education from talented teachers. With budget caps in place all of those activities suffer from a lack of money and little or no community support.

Our athletic program at Memorial was forced to raise its participation fee, hurting low-income students who wished to compete. Our music program at Memorial is suffering from a lack of space, poor ventilation, and a slowly deteriorating set of rentable instruments, intended to allow any student to be able to have their own instrument. Our student council is restricted from attempting any costly service projects to help the community and every classroom in Memorial requires maintenance or expansion.

Every year more students attend Memorial, tightening the fiscal noose until eventually simple janitorial repairs will be a struggle to finance. Hope for the future lies in our youth and the education they receive. The QEO restricts and diminishes the possibility that ~~the~~ future students of Wisconsin public schools will get as good of an education as Wisconsin has provided to its youth in the past.

Matt Valley, opposing educational budget caps  
6722 N. Highlands Ave Madison, WI 53705  
"Students United in Defense of Schools" (SUDS)  
James Madison Memorial H.S.

The welfare of students has for some time been one of the favorite social causes among politicians. The platform aimed to "lower class sizes" and "increase the use of technology in the classroom" is a perennial favourite, and at times, seems to represent a social parable followed dogmatically by leaders with a lack of more concrete issues to promote. However, better education is not a dogma. Cuts in school funding represents not only a real threat by denying material aid to those who need it, but it also sets a dangerous precedent against policy foresight in our government. Indeed, Wisconsin schools are now faced with the prospect of continued funding inadequacies, replaced by nearsighted desires for empty benefits such as temporary property tax relief.

My desire for sensible priorities in budget allocation has led me to join "SUDS". I urge you to seriously consider all arguments made for and against continuing a budget spending cap. However, please keep in mind the implications of any decision made. It represents more than just a short-term decision, but a statement that Wisconsin cares about maintaining its stature as possessing one of the finest public school systems in the nation.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and committee for hearing  
my name is Ambra Baldwin, and I <sup>us today</sup>  
am a senior at Mt. Horeb High School.

I'm here today to tell you about one of  
the problems our school has faced  
because of revenue caps.

When a contract agreement could not be met  
uncomfortable environment in school

\* teachers 8-4, not willing to do things not paid

\* Student Council

no ~~AHS~~ National Honor Society  
not able to get chaperones for  
events outside of the school day

\* papers slow to come back

\* no before or after help or make-up time

posters, arm bands, buttons

- It was hard going to class  
everyday knowing that things  
weren't settled. The teachers

enthusiasm and motivation decreased

~~with~~ everyday that ~~contracts weren't~~

~~settled~~. negotiations continued. Eventually

contracts were agreed upon, however

the year that it took to get there

was hard. I truly hope that

students in the future won't have

~~the~~ the pressure of knowing that their  
teachers ~~can't~~ <sup>can't</sup> be there for them because of state law

Hello, my name is Josh Arton, and I am a  
Senior at West H.S.

I would first like to thank Mr. Ford + Mr. Bobble,  
as well as the entire committee for allowing me this opportunity  
to speak.

I would <sup>like</sup> to talk about my brother, David. David  
was born with a genetic condition known  
as Familial Dysautonomia. Dysautonomia affects  
only around 400 people worldwide, and as of  
now, there are still many unanswered questions  
concerning the cause + treatment of the syndrome.

who attends VHE in  
5th grade.

Because of ~~the~~ Dysautonomia, David still weighs  
under 50 lbs, ~~and is now~~ <sup>though he is</sup> 12 yrs. old. He has  
limited motor skills + dexterity, as well as ~~several~~ <sup>among</sup> other  
physical limitations. Therefore, David has somewhat limited  
mobility, and ~~must~~ must be supervised at all times.  
At a meeting between David's parents, teachers, therapists,  
and a written rec. from his physician, all agree  
that David's condition requires him to be accompanied  
by a 1 on 1 aid at all times during the school day.  
Due to a lack of funding, this is not possible.  
David's 1 on 1 aid is now responsible for  
the care of between 2 + 4 children w/ spec needs  
simultaneously. Due to the ~~budget~~ <sup>revenue</sup> caps, the safety  
& education of not only my brother, but of the  
other spec. ed students is being compromised.  
Please change the law. Thank you.

Thank you, ~~chairmen~~ ~~board~~ ~~and~~ Burke and members of the committee.

My name is Ben Wiker, and I am <sup>the prez of WTS and a</sup> a senior <sup>group named SDS.</sup> at West High in Madison. My fellow students here ~~are~~ are from around the city and southern Wisconsin. For most of us, this is our first time at a legislative hearing.

Nobody asked us to be here. We are all missing school ~~today~~ ~~to be here~~ <sup>this not a school-sponsored field trip.</sup> Some of us drove long distances. We <sup>have come</sup> ~~are here~~ to tell you how the school revenue caps are hurting our education.

~~51~~ 51 students from six schools <sup>are here,</sup> members of the statewide, student-run ~~organization~~ <sup>organization</sup> Students United in Defense of Schools that ~~is~~ has members in 41 schools of over 30,000 students total. [We are supported by the WTSZ, <sup>WTSZ</sup>

a group of elected representatives from over 500 middle through ~~state~~ schools ~~in~~ that voted unanimously to support us.

Our schools are crumbling.

In a couple of years, all of us will vote. <sup>Some vote now.</sup> In twenty years, we will run the state. If the school revenue caps are not made more flexible, we will not ~~have~~ have the education to match tomorrow's Wisconsin as great as today's. I will yield the mic to ~~my~~ ~~the~~ the other students — and request that you consider your own time in high school as you listen to our testimonies, and the experiences of your children. My school is falling apart. ~~It could be yours.~~ It could be yours.

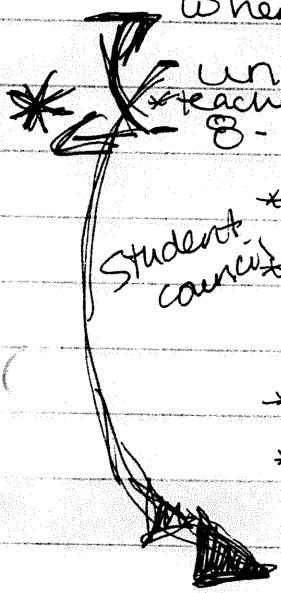
if you ~~do~~ nothing is done, ~~we~~ cannot remove the caps at least until we have flexible, regionalized ~~state~~ may will crumb.



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uncomfortable environment in school



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\* Student  
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Julie Schreiner  
430 Spring St  
Lake Geneva WI 53147  
# 414-241-3713

April 15

"My name is Julie Schreiner and I attend Badge (Lake Geneva / Geneva City) Union High School in Lake Geneva, WI. I feel the School Revenue Caps have harmed my school district. A referendum was finally passed in last 2 years to add much needed addition and space for students. However, this was much delayed. Our schools have been overcrowded for the past 6+ years. Now, these much needed additions are poorly supplied and staffed. We do not have ample computers for classrooms or our library because the addition has gone over budget. Before the edition we had classes in the cafeteria because there weren't enough classrooms for all the students. We also still suffer lack of library books, and outdated and lack of textbooks for classes. We still have overcrowded classes, I have had classes with 45 students in them, this is twice what the class size should be. I am also forced to chose between classes because of lack of teachers. Many classes are only offered one hour, and this I feel has decreased the quality of my education. More teachers would allow for more classes to be offered, increasing the quality of education at Badge. Changing the school revenue caps would allow for many of these problems to be change, and allow for happier

students and teachers.

Petey Hornemann  
609 Chatham Ter.  
Madison, WI 53711

We represent the students of Wisconsin. Every day, we go to the schools restricted by the revenue caps. And, as you've heard, every day we see the results.

The effects are disastrous. The future is even more grim. ~~We want~~ After a long tradition of excellence, Wisconsin's schools are deteriorating. Their quality decreases every year.

~~We ask for~~ Ultimately, we would like the ~~budget~~ <sup>revenue</sup> caps to be repealed. But, we realize that that is not a viable solution now is it really ~~within your power~~ <sup>realistic</sup> to make such a drastic change in a single budget.

What we <sup>is</sup> ~~ask~~ ask is that a few items be removed from under the caps. These things are subject to change & cannot be allotted for in a fixed annual budget. First, we would like building maintenance to be removed. Our schools are falling apart, and many are even unsafe to students. Second, special education. Pitting the needs of regular ed & special ed students against each other leads only to unhappy ends. Third, security. A school should never have to choose between keeping its students safe from gangs or falling ceiling tiles. Fourth, technology. These days, ~~student~~ a computer education is vital to a comprehensive education. ~~Fifth, fire~~

Our requests may seem numerous. ~~But~~ But  
our cause demands. Every day, our school's  
decline a little more. With each program that  
gets cut, each art class, each sports  
team, our school's get worse & worse. With  
every broken window, useless heating system,  
and ~~deep~~ rotten roof that remains un-  
fixed, students lose pride in their schools. ~~we~~  
~~are~~

- Peter

Stoneman



~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
Peter Koechley 2521 Chamberlain Ave  
Madison, WI 53705

I go to an excellent high school. I have been very lucky. I fear that the ~~the~~ elementary + middle schools ~~with~~ <sup>in</sup> that I know will not be so lucky. ~~I fear~~ ~~the~~ looking at my school, I see only deterioration + \_\_\_\_\_ in the future.

What have I ~~my~~ gained from high school? Well, I think that I grew much as a person from <sup>playing</sup> ~~participating~~ <sup>bassoon</sup> in my school's concert band. ~~My~~ My youngsters will not have ~~that~~ the same opportunity. The school's instruments are falling apart. We haven't bought a new instrument since the revenue cap was instituted.

My friends ~~who play strings~~ <sup>throughout the music department</sup> ran, with their teacher, a four-year fundraising campaign, selling wares door-to-door in order to buy working music stands + chairs.

~~I~~ I have taken a few art classes during high school. I have loved them. Due to curriculum sharing and curriculum ~~sharing~~ writing time ~~given~~ that used to be given to ~~the~~ the art teachers in my district, our art teachers and art curriculum have been praised across the country. Due to the revenue caps, these curriculum enrichment efforts have been cut.

As ~~the~~ art grows + changes, and new things are discovered about <sup>art</sup> education, our curriculum will get more + more

outdated. New ideas will be shared less & less. Our art program will lose its dynamism.

The arts reach out to students in the same way that sports do. They help kids who do not excel academically. They give students the chance to shine who would otherwise ~~be~~ drop through ~~the~~ in the cracks.

Please change the revenue caps so that school boards have the flexibility to fund the arts as they need to be funded.

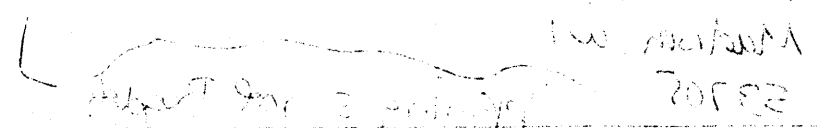
Haben Goitom (608) 238-5767  
21 Wakeman St.  
Madison, WI  
53705

Haben  
Goitom  
Madison, WI  
James Madison  
Memorial H.S.

### Opposing School Budget Caps

I have been privileged enough to have grown up in Madison and have attended Public school <sup>here</sup> for the past 12 yrs. Students have reaped the benefits of well funded + strongly supported public schools. The school budget caps, however, <sup>have</sup> will severely hurt our schools. Currently I play in the orchestra at Memorial H.S. and our rehearsal space is so extremely small for the 100+ instrumentalists, our room was found to be a fire hazard. Our advanced Biology classes have 26-30 students ea. hour and there is such a lack of space that students sit alongside of our teacher. These are my last few weeks in the Madison School District but I do have a sixth grade brother who may or may not attend public schools. I fear for the future, a future where my brother's education will be dictated by a short-sighted economic policy. However ~~clearly~~ it may be, the truth is students are the future, and it is incumbent on this body to look for not only the short term benefits of lower property taxes but also the long term damage done to our cherished Wisconsin schools. Money must be spent for new technology to improve education opportunities. Public schools in Wisconsin can not be come archaic + unresponsive, we must also leave room for the needs of special education student, and cover fixed costs for bldg. maintenance. Currently, the CEO pits teachers against the school boards in order to win control of a slowly decreasing amount of scarce resources. Instead of a friendly atmosphere of cooperation there exists

the school board  
should be aware  
of the situation



the school board  
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of the situation

a damaging destructive spiral of union ~~actions~~ <sup>labour actions</sup> and  
harsh monetary restrictions set by the school boards.

Hi my name is Pabitra Benjamin. I'm a senior at West High School, a leader of 5 ~~st~~ student organizations, and the president of the UMSD student senate - an elected position representing the 25,000 Madison Metropolitan students. I am here to speak as a voice from the students against the School Revenue Caps.

The student senate began early this fall and identified about 200 issues to work on in the district we could not follow through with many of our concerns because we did not have the money.

We wanted to diversify the curriculum in order to open classes in which students would be excited to attend. Unfortunately instead of widening our curriculum the curriculum has been downsized due to financial limits.

We wanted to hold a diversity conference to unite the students but we could not follow through because, once again, we didn't have funds.

Another issue was the raise in athletic fees and lack of middle school sports. High fees and program cuts are restricting students' ~~participation~~ from participating in their schools.

(We wanted to ~~provide~~ <sup>provide</sup> foreign languages in our elementary schools to prepare them for living in our now very diverse society. We could not follow through because, once again, we didn't have funds.)

I am also a part of many school organizations where

we are struggling to find money to stay active.  
Students are put in the positions where they  
must use their own money in order to hold a  
multicultural luncheon or a fine arts performance.  
As students we are told to get involved in our  
schools and communities but without money,  
~~extracurricular~~ programs are being dropped and  
students are finding less and less motivation.  
Remember - something I've been told year after year -  
and something that is the truth - we are your  
future!

hello!

My name is Amanda Runk and I also go to Fort Washington High School. What I would like to add to what Liz has just said, is that without the referendum <sup>n</sup><sub>p</sub> none of the maintenance which is now being taken care of would have been available due to revenue caps.

At our High School, our Auditor was leaking and our roof in some areas was collapsing. Choir & Band students were being rained on during concerts. The repairs were needed long ago, however up until last year, there were no funds.

Also in the High School, our Chemistry & Biology labs are all being remodeled due to the referendum.

Currently some of the equipment is 20-30 years old, and are possible ~~to~~ <sup>hazardous</sup> to health & safety ~~to~~.

Our school, before the referendum was passed was also not up to the required standards for Handicap access. Handicapped students were unable to attend classes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

due to the lack of elevator & ramp  
~~access~~ availability. Now ~~at~~ finally,  
after lacking behind so many  
schools for so long, ~~the~~ <sup>because of the referendum</sup> ~~summarized~~  
~~and the passing of the referendum~~,  
our school as well as the 4 others  
in our district will be code standard  
handicapp accessible

As another example, an elementary  
school in our district has been and is  
currently using their gymnasium  
as a cafeteria. Due to the referendum,  
The school's gymnasium & cafeteria  
will have separate settings <sup>for the first time</sup> next year

These are just a few examples  
of how revenue caps have hindered  
the maintenance & upgrade of our  
school district. <sup>school's</sup> ~~we~~ shouldn't have to  
~~rely~~ rely on a referendum like  
Port Washington High School or cutting  
of school sponsored programs <sup>like so many</sup> just <sup>other</sup> ~~schools~~  
to fix a leaky roof.



Hello!

My name is Amanda Runaas and I also go to Port Washington High School. What I would like to add to what Liz has just said, is that without the referendum <sup>which we passed last</sup> none of the maintenance which is now being taken care of would have been available due to revenue caps.

At our High School, our Auditorium was leaking and our roof in some areas was collapsing. Choir & Band students were being rained on during concerts. The repairs were needed long ago, however up until last year, there were no funds.

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Port Washington High School or cutting  
of school sponsored programs <sup>like so many</sup> just <sup>other</sup> schools  
to fix a leaky roof.

I'm a senior at Port Washington High School, and here today to speak to you about my feelings and experiences with revenue caps.

Port Washington is a small town of about 10,000 people. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday enrollment at the high school was 911 students. When the revenue caps came into effect in they had a rocky beginning in our district of 5 schools. We had to cut \$1 million from the district's budget that year. Most of this money was taken out of maintenance and staff positions. We lost such "secondary" positions as alternate education coordinator and after-school supervisor.

Since then, our financial situation has stabilized somewhat. We have managed not to suffer as significantly as other districts. However, most of our staff has a severe distaste for the revenue caps. It has affected morale and professional self-esteem, and that reflects the students.

The Port Washington-Saukville School District now finds itself at a crossroads. Last spring the community narrowly passed a \$4.9 million referendum. This referendum provided for much-needed repair upgrades for which there were not enough reserves in the budget. At the high school, we used the referendum funds to repair the collapsing auditorium and handicap access throughout the entire school. If the referendum failed, the school district would be left as collateral and gone into debt to

most pressing needs filled. We may also have had to cut a significant amount of extracurricular support and to take across-the-board downsizing. As our principal says, academics will always come first; but we hate to have to even make the choice between academics and extracurriculars.

Currently there are over \$1 million in requests to the school board from our 5 district schools, but there is only \$80,000 to give out. A group of district parents recently came before the board to request the development of a hockey program at the high school, since the club program that their children participate in will be ending. The school district cannot afford to pay one cent of a new program's costs, and so all expenses of this program will be paid for by the parents.

Our school district wants very much to continue to maintain the high standards of our community and state. However, with the way that revenue caps have restricted our resources, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to do so.

I am at Port Washington High School, and I am  
pleased to speak to you about my feelings for, and  
concerns with, revenue caps.

Port Washington is a small town of about 19,000 people.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Friday enrollment at the high school was 914

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