



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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**Testimony regarding 1 percent solution  
Sen. Rosenzweig and Rep. Staskunas  
Senate Education Committee  
May 9, 2001**

I appear before you today on behalf of Rep. Staskunas and myself to ask the members of the Senate Education Committee to support Senate Bill 153 and its companion in the Assembly, AB 347.

During months of deliberation, the Kettl Commission spent considerable time discussing the problems that school districts face today. One of the proposals the Commission discussed was the "1 percent solution." These bills are an outgrowth of those discussions, mirroring a proposal the Department of Public Instruction floated last year and included in its budget request to the Governor this year. The legislation also stems from meetings Rep. Staskunas and I had with the Superintendent of Schools in West Allis and members of the school board. They told us they need this legislation to meet some very basic needs like rising heating costs, increasing health care costs, and the cost of maintaining older buildings. After listening to these individuals who deal with the tough issues on the front line every day, we were compelled to comply with their request for introduction.

Rep. Staskunas and I believe that this legislation offers a tool to local school boards that are struggling under serious budget constraints while maintaining revenue caps, which are so important to property taxpayers. Under SB 153 and AB 347, a school board may choose to exceed the revenue caps by 1-percent but the additional aid would not be built into the base for school aid calculation the following year. Also, the property tax levy would be exclusive to each community. That means that individuals from one community in the state would not be footing the bill for increases in another community. Finally, the additional revenue would be nonrecurring. Each year the school board would have to reach a super-majority conclusion that this is a good option to exercise.

Some of you may be concerned about the fiscal impact of this bill and we acknowledge the Department of Public Instruction's cost estimate is a basis for pause but please recognize the number they presented is based on the assumption that every school district will exercise this option. We believe this is untrue and that many school districts will not even try to reach a super-majority vote necessary to exceed the revenue caps.

We can only assume that each of you represents at least one school district that is challenged by demands on its budget. As you deliberate today, we hope you reflect on past conversations with your school superintendents and school board members who have brought the high cost of health care, rising heating prices and schools in grave need of repair to your attention. Please send this bill to the Joint Finance Committee where it can act as a catalyst for debate on the subject of revenue caps. We believe that through reasonable and diligent negotiations, we can reach a conclusion on this difficult issue that will benefit schools, students, parents and taxpayers. Thank you.