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Details: Public Hearing – November 15, 2007

(FORM UPDATED: 07/12/2010)

**WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS**

2007-08

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Education (SC-Ed)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**
- Record of Comm. Proceedings ... **RCP**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt**
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule**
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

9/18

Stromme, Denise

From: Lauri [melissas@merr.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2007 4:12 PM
To: Sen. Lehman
Subject: Recent Wisconsin Heights School referendum

Dear Senator Lehman,

I just wanted to drop you an e-mail about a critical education system failure out our way. I am a resident of the town of Mazomanie, our school district is Wisconsin Heights. Which is the district for both Mazomanie, and Black Earth residents.

Each village current houses its own elementary schools K-5 at Mazo and EC-5th at Black Earth, the district has already approved realignment of the grade schools, Black Earth will house EC-2nd with the possibility of a day care and a 4yr old kdgn program and Mazo will house 3rd-5th starting this next fall.

Our district has been trimming the fat off the budget for quiet a while, we are at the point now that we have to cut summer band, athletic programs, and blding repairs and the list goes on and on.

Our enrollment has been declining for some time, open enrollment did not do our school district any favors. And with that happening the loss of revenue is catching up, as is the money we take in. Our communities have kind of missed the boat in a since for growth as other communities have been bursting at the seams, as has been very little. Mostly because we have no real businesses in either village, we have an elderly communities with fixed incomes or low income based rental property in the Mazomanie area. This all has hurt our school district deeply, in the form of loss revenue. Mileage wise we are almost as close to Madison as is the Mt. Horeb, Blue Mounds and

Sauk-Prairie area where school growth has been taking place. Our rural setting out our way is beautiful, the rolling hills and closeness to Madison should be a selling point to get people out here, but it hasn't been.

We have 2 new sub divisions in Black Earth with few new houses that have sold. Mazomanie also has 2 new sub division and have been able to sell more houses. Our communities house no grocery store, just your gas station type pit stops for things you may have forgotten at a neighboring villages grocery store, Black Earth has Trails Media, The Shoe box and a handful of other businesses, just no big employers, most people commute else where.

Our property taxes are high because of the lack of these things.

We were asked to make a decision the residents of the Wisconsin Heights School dist to vote yes for a referendum of the tune of \$700,000, on Feb 20th. This referendum did not pass it failed by less than a hundred votes.

I can say my self it was a tough decision to make at the polls that day, as important as education is to me, and to my family, I knew a yes vote would mean a property tax increase, and yes I can say it would make things tighter in our family situation, but we would have been ok. But many of our elderly on fixed incomes who own their own homes had no choice but to vote No as they can't afford anymore.

These people, (our parents and grandparents) that have worked until retirement age and thought they had put enough away for a golden retirement, just aren't being able to live out that dream. Increased taxes, health ins, and run away drug cost are forcing our elderly to live anything but a golden retirement. I have relatives that are barely hanging on to there home in our community. They have paid there dues as paying in yrs of property and business taxes, to have hoped to have a sunny, golden retirement.

Something needs to be done and done soon for our School district, you are in a position to help make a difference.

Every one says they care about education, lets really show how much we care, lets help out the small and struggling school districts that are making an effort to do everything right, small class sizes, teachers and staff who really know you.

We need help at keeping our district alive, we need your help, your support, we need to know that the people we have put into office really do care about the future of our children.

Without any out side changes soon on school funding I am afraid the doors of a great school district will be closing forever.

I will be gather what information I have kept and forwarding thru the mail to you. Our hands our tied out here, it is not the communities fault this did not pass, many people can not pay out any more.

Monday evening channel 3 @ 10 pm. had a story on.

The capital times and State Journal has also had a few stories prior to the referendum vote.

Our local news paper the News Sickle Arrow has been running wkly stories also.

I can't tell you enough we need your help and that of the others on your committee.
And this help to small struggling school districts like ours needs to happen soon.

Sincerely,
Lauri Schroeder
9680 Spring Valley rd,
Mazomanie, Wi 53560

2/28/2007

Dauscher, Sara

From: Stromme, Denise
Sent: Tuesday, November 06, 2007 7:59 AM
To: Dauscher, Sara
Subject: FW: Association for Equity in Funding November 2007 Newsletter

From: DianeZierer@aol.com [mailto:DianeZierer@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, November 05, 2007 8:36 PM
To: Sen.Taylor; Sen.Miller; Sen.Olsen; Sen.Kapanke; Sen.grothman@legis.wisconsin.gov; Sen.Vinehout; Sen.Breske; Sen.Coggs; Sen.Cowles; Sen.Darling; Sen.Decker; Sen.Ellis; Sen.Hansen; Sen.Harsdorf; Sen.Jauch; Sen.Kanavas; Sen.Kedzie; Sen.Lasee; Sen.Lassa; Sen.Lazich; Sen.Leibham; Sen.Plale; Sen.Risser; Sen.Robson; Sen.Schultz; Sen.Lehman; Sen.Wirch; Sen.Kreitlow; Sen.Erpenbach; Sen.Fitzgerald; Sen.Carpenter; Sen.Sullivan; Sen.Roessler
Subject: Association for Equity in Funding November 2007 Newsletter

AEF NOVEMBER, 2007 NEWSLETTER

Finally the 2007-09 budget is settled and we are told all is well in the world of public school finance. It is true that it is better to have the budget behind us, but many major problems remain.

This budget will cause spending and taxing disparities to increase as general equalization aid will increase only 8/10ths of one per cent while categorical aids will increase 12% and the school levy credit will increase 26%. Some categorical aids are targeted to students with additional educational needs, but the levy credit is not and never has been.

The growth of school district revenues continues to be limited to an amount which will not allow school districts to raise the revenues needed to cover the full cost of the services they must provide. A good example is special education funding. Since the adoption of revenue limits:

- the disabled student population has grown 29.8%;
- special education costs have increased 98.4%;
- categorical aid has increased 27.4%; and
- the allowable revenue limit (consumer price index) has increased 35.2%.

The result was that school districts have been forced to absorb the difference each year. In total school districts were forced to absorb \$390.5 million in 2006-07 (see table below).

	1993-94	2006-07	Change	% Change
Disabled Students	99,415	129,000*	+ 29,585	+ 29.8%
Special Ed. Costs	\$585.9	\$1,162.3*	+ \$576.4	+ 98.4%
Categorical Aid	\$261.3	\$332.8	+ \$71.5	+ 27.4%
Allowable Revenue	\$324.5	\$438.9	+ \$114.4	+ 35.2%
Costs Absorbed	\$ 0	\$390.5	+ \$390.5	

All dollar figures are in millions

* estimates

Even though this new state budget will increase special education categorical aid by \$17.4 million in 2007-08

and \$18.7 million in 2008-09, the revenue problem will continue to get worse. School districts will be forced to absorb an additional \$23.2 million in 2007-08 (making a total of \$413.7 million) and another \$23.9 million in 2008-09 (making a total of \$437.6 million). Because costs not aided and not in the revenue limit base must be absorbed school districts will be forced to make cuts of these amounts in other areas. And because of the wide variation (4% to 28%) in the population of disabled students a school district must serve this revenue problem will impact some districts much more heavily than others.

The root of this problem is that neither the growth in the disabled population nor the full cost of serving them is recognized under the revenue limits. If it had been in effect when revenue limits were adopted a pupil weighting system based on the full cost of services provided would have increased allowable revenues by the full amount (\$390.5 million in 2006-07) that has had to be absorbed. The result would have been to eliminate the shortfall of revenues needed to cover special education costs. And we would not be looking forward to more budget cuts to absorb future shortfalls because we serve disabled students.

Similarly, the shortfall incurred in serving English Language Learners in 2006-07 was \$ 50.0 million and that will increase in both 2007-08 and 2008-09. Revenue limits do not recognize either the growth in the ELL population or the full cost of serving them.

How can we solve our revenue shortfall problem?

AEF has joined the School Finance Network in trying to address school finance issues in a way we can all support. The SFN is a group of 11 public school organizations representing school boards, school administrators, teachers and parents. A major recommendation of the SFN is expected to be an increase in the index for allowable revenue limit growth. For example, if growth were tied to personal income the 5 year rolling average rate this year would have been about 4%. And if the revenue limits recognized the full cost of serving disabled and ELL students school districts would not be forced to absorb an increasing amount of these costs through other budget cuts.

At this time the SFN plan has not been completed. The intention is to complete it soon so that state policy makers will have time to thoroughly consider it in the context of the next state budget.

Association for Equity in Funding
Doug Haselow, Executive Director
(866) 781-8332 – dhaselow@aol.com

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Stromme, Denise

From: LARRY BLACK [LBLACK@wisheights.k12.wi.us]
Sent: Wednesday, November 07, 2007 1:03 PM
To: Rep.Pope-Roberts; Sen.Breske; Sen.Lehman
Cc: Sen.Erpenbach; BOB AVERY; Jeff Fancsali; Jennifer Wolf; Kay Butcher; Kim Sears-Hacker; Sue Beil; Tom Turk; Terry Zander
Subject: SJR 27

Hello Senator Lehman, Senator Breske, and Rep. Pope-Roberts. I wish to register in support of SJR 27 and AJR 35 on behalf of the Wisconsin Heights School District.

Wisconsin Heights School District has experienced severe declining enrollment over the past several years and our district has had to make major program and staffing cuts as a result. Our recent referendum (which failed) unfortunately polarized our community and pitted the best interests of children against those who felt a tax increase would constitute hardship on district citizens. Legislation that would change school funding is something our district desperately needs.

I hope to attend the Senate Education Committee hearing on SJR 27 scheduled for November 15, if my schedule permits. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do or that you might like from me in regard to SJR 27 and AJR 35.

Larry Black
District Administrator
Wisconsin Heights School District
10173 US Hwy 14
Mazomanie, WI 53560

608-767-2595 [phone]
608-767-3579 [fax]

*Sara -
Committee
needed*

Stromme, Denise

From: BOB AVERY [BAVERY@wisheights.k12.wi.us]
Sent: Wednesday, November 07, 2007 3:00 PM
To: Rep.Pope-Roberts; Sen.Breske; Sen.Lehman
Cc: Rep.Travis; Rep.Hahn; Rep.Hilgenberg; Sen.Erpenbach; Sen.Miller;
tbeebe@wisconsinsfuture.org; LARRY BLACK
Subject: SJR 27

Honorable Senator Lehman, Senator Breske, and Rep. Pope-Roberts:

Thank you for addressing the vital issue of school funding. The current school funding model in Wisconsin dates back to the early 1990s and its need of being jettisoned in favor of a new formula that adequately and equitably funds Wisconsin's schools. Even with the tweaks to the current law that were part of the 2007-2009 state biennial budget, it is inadequate to ensure sound public schools.

Since 1998, when district enrollment peaked at 1225, Wisconsin Heights has seen severe declining enrollments (-26% in the last decade, -4% this year). Consequently, the fiscal position of the district has been compromised. Over the next five years (including 07-08), in order to maintain programs and services, this district will run a cumulative deficit of \$3.25 million. The WHSD fund 10 operating budget is just under \$10 million annually. (Without the changes made to school funding formula in this year's state budget, our five-year cumulative deficit would have been \$5.8 million.)

And it is not as if Wisconsin Heights is spending freely. For the 2007-08 budget alone, more than \$870,000 in budget cuts were implemented - or nearly 9% of our Fund 10 budget, in one year.

Last spring this district went to referendum. When asked "What can be done about the budget deficits" our answer was that, short of passing a referendum and increasing local taxes, the only solution for the district was for a change in the state funding formula to be adopted. The referendum failed.

SJR 27 and AJR 35 provide hope that a long-term solution can be found at the state level, as this is a state problem. Therefore, I wish to register in support of SJR 27 and AJR 35 on behalf of the Wisconsin Heights School District and I plan on attending the Senate Education Committee hearing on SJR 27 scheduled for November 15.

Please let me know if there is anything else I can do or that you might like from me in regard to SJR 27 and AJR 35.

-Bob

Robert Avery
Director of Business Services
Wisconsin Heights School District
10173 Hwy 14
Mazomanie, WI 53560-9587
608-767-2595 X1139
bavery@wisheights.k12.wi.us

for committee hearing

This email and any attachments may contain confidential and privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately by return email, delete this email and destroy any copies. Any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and might not represent those of Wisconsin Heights School District.

Stromme, Denise

From: Laura Biesterveld [biestelm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us]
Sent: Wednesday, November 07, 2007 7:35 PM
To: Sen. Lehman
Subject: SJR27

Dear Senator Lehman,

As an educator in Wisconsin, I think the school funding formula needs to be reconsidered. Not only are the children of Milwaukee being underserved, but children in rural areas are being done a disservice as well. I understand you are the Committee Chair and there will be a hearing on November 15. Please be aware that the children of Wisconsin deserve better. Wisconsin once was known as having an excellent educational system. That is no longer the case. Please help the educators return Wisconsin to a top notch education state. Please support SJR27.

Thank you,
Laura Biesterveld
Curriculum Generalist
Honey Creek Continuous Progress School
414-604-7906

*Sold -
Best place in
correspondence for
Committee*

Stromme, Denise

From: Jonathan J. Berg [cjlight@centurytel.net]

Sent: Friday, November 09, 2007 6:58 PM

To: Sen.Lehman; SenBreske@legis.wisconsin.gov; RepPopeRoberts@legis.wisconsin.gov

Subject: K-12 School Reform

Dear Legislatures:

As an educator for 30 years (retired) and now as a school board member, I fully understand the importance of school financial reform.

Two areas to strongly look at removing from cost controls - special education and transportation. I'm sure you've heard all the reasons. It's time to act and move forward to allow districts to support curricular needs to continually strive for better achievement.

I hope the two parties can work together much better than in the past to bring health to this most pressing issue!

Respectfully,

Jonathan J. Berg
Lakeland Union High School Board Member

*Sara
Sore*

Stromme, Denise

From: Gina DacQuisto [balquisto@copper.net]
Sent: Friday, November 09, 2007 8:55 PM
To: Sen.Lehman
Subject: 2007 Assembly joint Resolution 35

Dear Senator Lehmann,

My school has made me aware of the meeting of your Committee to discuss AJR 35 in Madison on November 15, 2007. I cannot be present at the meeting to testify before the committee. As a parent in the Milwaukee Public School system, I have seen my school, an elementary Montessori school, lose funding and excess aides and teachers and generally lose ground due to shrinking enrollment. I have seen "high-performing" schools gaining funding rewards under the No Child Left Behind Act that the school does not need to continue its high performance, while my school gets less and less funding to continue it's wonderful, yet small community.

Please pass on my concern in the methods surrounding funding of public schools in Wisconsin and look deeply into changing the way we have been doing things.

Thank you for your attention,

Gina DacQuisto
3481 N Fratney St
Milwaukee, WI 53212

SARA
Gone

Stromme, Denise

From: Dauscher, Sara
Sent: Monday, November 12, 2007 12:08 PM
To: *Legislative Senate Democrats; *Legislative Senate Republicans; *Legislative Assembly Democrats; *Legislative Assembly Republicans
Subject: Location change: 11/15 Senate Education Committee Hearing

Senate

PUBLIC HEARING

Committee on Education

The committee will hold a public hearing on the following items at the time specified below:

Thursday, November 15, 2007
10:30 AM
411 South
State Capitol

Senate Joint Resolution 27

Relating to: calling for changes to the state's public school funding formula to be enacted by July 1, 2009.

By Senators Breske, Carpenter, Coggs, Erpenbach, Hansen, Lassa, Lehman, Miller, Plale, Risser, Sullivan, Taylor, Vinehout, Wirch and Ellis; cosponsored by Representatives Pope-Roberts, Sherman, Toles, Benedict, Berceau, Black, Boyle, Colon, Cullen, Fields, Garthwaite, Grigsby, Gronemus, Hebl, Hilgenberg, Hintz, Hixson, Hraychuck, Hubler, Jorgensen, Kessler, Kreuser, Molepske, Nelson, Parisi, Pocan, Richards, Schneider, Seidel, Sheridan, Shilling, Sinicki, Smith, Soletski, Staskunas, Steinbrink, Travis, Turner, Van Akkeren, Vruwink, Wasserman, A. Williams, Young and Zepnick.

11/12/2007: The location was changed to 411 South.

Stromme, Denise

From: Dugan, Stefanie [SDugan@chw.org]
Sent: Monday, November 12, 2007 3:55 PM
To: Sen.Lehman; Sen.Coggs; Rep.Young
Subject: 11/15/2007 school funding reform

→ Sora

Dear Senator Lehman, Senator Coggs and Representative Young,

I am unable to attend the Senate Education Committee hearing in Madison on November 15, but want to register my position in support of a comprehensive change in the state's school-funding formula.

I am contacting the three of you as the committee chair and the elected officials who represent me in the Wisconsin State Legislature. I am not only a property tax payer in the city of Milwaukee, with my residence of 1825 N 1st St, but also a concerned parent of a child in the Milwaukee Public School system. I believe that the current funding system does not adequately account for the broad needs of the student population of MPS. I have witnessed first-hand how even the best-performing schools in MPS suffer at the hands of the current funding system. I echo the sentiments in the two editorials copied below.

I support the changes that must be made to the funding system to: increase state support to MPS, allow schools to spend efficiently without fear of correlated reductions in subsequent funding, and level the playing field between more affluent suburban school districts and poorer urban school districts.

The future of the children of Milwaukee, and the future economic and social well-being of the city and the state as a whole, depend on the action and courage of the Legislature to take on and correct this faulty funding system.

Thank you for your concern.

Stefanie Dugan

1825 N 1st Street

Milwaukee, WI 53212

sdugan@chw.org

Editorial: It's a formula problem

The property tax increase proposed by the district is largely a result of a broken school funding system in Wisconsin.

From the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Oct. 31, 2007

Milwaukee Public Schools must educate the students it has. That is a given. But consider who these

children are.

They are among the poorest kids in the nation. Many of them come to school hungry. Many of them come to school from broken families, hoping for encouragement that they otherwise will not receive. Many come from poverty so grinding that the desperation of it can scarcely be imagined.

So why then has the State of Wisconsin cut its aid to MPS by \$19.2 million?

In the furor over Superintendent William Andrekopoulos' proposed 16.4% increase in property taxes, which is a result of that aid cut, scant attention has been paid to the formula that channels state aid to public schools. It is a deeply flawed and unfair system that the Legislature must finally summon the political courage to fix.

MPS is caught in a vise of declining enrollment and rising property values. A key factor in the state's school funding formula is property value per student, and Milwaukee's numbers on that score are rising faster than the state average. That reduces the amount of aid MPS receives even as poverty deepens. The less state aid, the higher the property taxes.

MPS has economized by cutting teachers and bus routes and closing schools. It has gone to arbitration to force teachers to pay more for health insurance. But even with fewer students, it is expensive to run a district of this size.

The problem is on the revenue side of the ledger. And it is made worse because the Legislature took a pass on fixing the way voucher schools are funded. Because of that, city property taxpayers will still pay more of the tab for educating a voucher school student than for educating an MPS student.

When the School Board meets again tonight on Andrekopoulos' spending plan, the board may challenge aspects of it, including his proposal to spend \$5 million to hire more math and science teachers. Those positions would be paid for with state dollars next September. But in "The Twilight Zone" of school finance in Wisconsin, even realistic cuts make no sense. Cuts in spending this year translate into cuts in state aid next year.

MPS must be accountable. While some of the achievement indicators are positive, others are not. There has been progress, but it has been inadequate and slow. Property taxpayers have a right to complain and to demand more of the district. The proposed hike in taxes would cost them, on average, \$178 more. But they also should take those complaints to Madison, where the problem can be fixed.

And the only long-term fix is to stop pretending that MPS is like every other district in Wisconsin.

Editorial: Lessons in a budget

The school district must be more efficient, but political and business leaders must work to fix a flawed state aid formula.

From the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Nov. 2, 2007

Superintendent William Andrekopoulos ignited a property tax revolt this week when he asked for a

16.4% increase in taxes to plug a gaping hole in the Milwaukee Public Schools budget. The School Board wisely cut that increase in the wee hours of Friday morning after a big crowd showed up to protest.

It has been clear for a long time that taxpayers are fed up with property tax increases and that they don't trust administrators to deliver results. But what should also be clear now is that MPS faces a host of financial troubles that are only going to grow worse.

The cost of post-retirement benefits hangs over the district like a storm cloud and will make budgeting difficult in the coming years. So will the district's decision not to spend the maximum amount allowed under state law in this budget. The formula for distributing state aid to schools plays a cruel joke on districts by punishing efficiency. The less a district spends, the less it gets in state aid the following years.

And make no mistake, the \$19 million cut in state aid to MPS for this budget is senseless. The district serves some of the nation's poorest children.

But while cost-cutting has become an annual ritual as schools have closed and teaching positions have vanished, MPS must find more ways to economize. A Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance study earlier this year noted that MPS "is paying relatively more for less experienced teachers; and, regardless of salary level, paying out more in benefits, as well."

At the same time, the governor, legislators and the region's business leaders must work collaboratively to fix the broken state aid system and a flaw in the way the voucher schools are funded, which compounds the problem. If MPS is really the most important work force development agency in the region, as some leaders like to say, they will solve these critical problems. Failure to do so will mean even harder decisions for MPS and city taxpayers down the road.

As the taxpayers alliance noted in its March report, "The combined effect of lost market share, district spending choices (particularly in the fringe benefit area), tightening state revenue controls and uncertain federal funding means that the expenditure demands MPS faces will grow faster than available revenues. Annual rounds of budget retrenchment are inevitable."

Children's Hospital and Health System recognizes that unencrypted e-mail is not secure and does not guarantee confidentiality. The confidentiality of replies to this message cannot be guaranteed unless the replies are encrypted.

Stromme, Denise

From: Beth Hoffmann [hoffmannh@wi.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 9:13 AM
To: Sen.Lehman
Subject: SJR 27

Good morning, Senator Lehman,
Thank you for providing a means for me to register in favor of SJR27.
I received excellent education in public schools, my children received excellent education, including outstanding music education, in Wisconsin public schools, and I want these opportunities for other people's children also.
Thank you for your attention and consideration.
Elizabeth N. Hoffmann
Waukesha

Committee record

Stromme, Denise

From: Janet Bashirian [sweetsister@wi.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 9:46 PM
To: Sen.Lehman
Subject: In favor of SJR 27

Dear Senator Lehman:

I am a long time educator with 34 years in the school district of Waukesha. I am not able to attend the hearing scheduled for Thursday, but wanted to indicate my support of the Senate Joint Resolution 27.

Over the past 10 years, my district has experienced huge losses in programming, staff and services due to the funding formula. I was personally involved in a community task force several years ago to study the district budget and determine the areas of waste and/or unnecessary expenditures. After hours of discussions and sessions that explained the purpose and cost for every level of the district's budget, we came to the conclusion that the Waukesha district was using their dollars frugally and responsibly. Despite that conclusion, we had to find \$3M of reductions. We continued to see reductions and loss of programs every year after that. Last year we again reduced our programs and services by \$3.5M and have been told to expect the same this coming spring. We have lost over 100 teachers, raised class sizes to unreasonable levels, have eliminated elementary librarians, guidance counselors, Gifted and Talented staff, reduced custodial and clerical staff, reduced music opportunities for our elementary students, postponed expenditures for repairs and supplies etc. These changes are forcing families to make different choices for schooling in order to have the quality and variety of programs they value for their children. This in turn causes our enrollment to go down and the revenues to decrease as a result. I have done a great deal of studying of this problem and have come to the conclusion that the funding formula is no longer working and the taxation method in our state is outdated, unfair and in desperate need of reform. This joint resolution attempts to address the discrepancies and flaws in the way Wisconsin funds education. Please support this resolution. I would like to see a formula that:

*Establishes school-funding levels based on the actual cost of providing an education.

*Provides sufficient state resources to meet state and federal mandates.

*Is flexible enough to meet special circumstances, including students with special needs and districts with specific geographic and demographic situations.

*Provides a combination of state funds and a reduced level of property taxes derived from a taxation system that treats everyone fairly.

Sincerely,

Janet Bashirian
10415 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

Dauscher, Sara

From: Stromme, Denise
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 9:53 AM
To: Dauscher, Sara
Subject: FW: SJR 27

-----Original Message-----

From: Beth Hoffmann [mailto:hoffmannh@wi.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 9:13 AM
To: Sen.Lehman
Subject: SJR 27

Good morning, Senator Lehman,
Thank you for providing a means for me to register in favor of SJR27.
I received excellent education in public schools, my children received excellent education, including outstanding music education, in Wisconsin public schools, and I want these opportunities for other people's children also.
Thank you for your attention and consideration.
Elizabeth N. Hoffmann
Waukesha

Stromme, Denise

From: Khartling@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 10:24 PM
To: Sen.Lehman
Subject: Senate Hearing on SJR 27 November 15

Dear Senator John Lehman -

My name is Ken Hartling Jr, I am a taxpayer and a parent with two children in the Waukesha School District. Both my wife & I were born and raised in the Waukesha School District and we have always felt that this is where we want our children to grow up. Lately we have been very concerned that the current state funding law for education is hurting schools. Perception is that you are really not that concerned regarding the education of kids but more focused on other issues. If we don't truly put kids first and their education first, we will be paying the price for many years to come. Over the past couple years, we have seen significant cuts taken into effect that is not only degrading our children's education but also the educational experiences in joining/participating in clubs & programs. It breaks my heart to hear that unless the financial situation changes, class sizes will continue to grow, extra support and help will not be available and kids will miss out of after school clubs/programs along with the music/drama departments will be reduced or cut.

Although neither my wife or I can attend the Senate Hearing on SJR 27 November 15 in person to indicate our support for comprehensive funding reform, we are closely following this effort and participating within local activities and discussions. I encourage you to please support the goals of this resolution and work with all legislators to develop a new funding plan. Wisconsin needs a plan whose primary purpose is to educate children and investing in that education is the best, most effective use of state funds to ensure a thriving economy and a great future for the state of Wisconsin.

Respectively yours,

Ken & Barb Hartling
2901 Rocky Creek Drive
Waukesha WI, 53189

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Stromme, Denise

From: Steve Scharlau [steve@propertyprosource.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 10:27 PM
To: Sen.Lehman
Cc: Rep.Gronemus; Sen.Vinehout
Subject: SJR 27 input

Mr. Lehman,

It is my understanding that I can provide input on SJR 27 to you since I cannot make the hearing on Nov. 15th.

It seems that a commitment to reconsider the bigger picture of school finance is the least we can do. As a local school board member, I can assure you that we have experienced major changes due to reduced funding. It has prompted me to start initiatives for more accountability at the local level for results and transparency in our governance expectations. We will continue to shore things up in our district & I hope you can help commit to reform at the state level.

Thanks & regards,
Steve Scharlau
Fountain City, WI
608-687-3300

May you also enjoy this signature thought:

"Only when what you think coincides with what you say and what you do will you find happiness."Mahatma Gandhi

Stromme, Denise

From: Pamela R Ison [stampinpam@juno.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 10:49 AM
To: Sen. Lehman
Subject: Senate Joint Resolution 27

I want to let you know that I am in favor of Senate Joint Resolution 27 that sets a deadline for school funding reform. I live in Waukesha and am very concerned about my sons education in this school district. Because of the unfair funding formula, my school district has been forced to cut \$3 million or more a year in order to balance their budget. My sons in elementary school have now had all guidance counselors and librarians eliminated and class sizes have increased. Please support the Senate Joint Resolution 27. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Pam Ison
2836 Coventry Lane
Waukesha WI 53188
(262) 970-9550

*SJR 27
file*

Dauscher, Sara

From: Stromme, Denise
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 10:52 AM
To: Dauscher, Sara
Subject: FW: Senate Joint Resolution 27

-----Original Message-----

From: Pamela R Ison [mailto:stampinpam@juno.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 10:49 AM
To: Sen. Lehman
Subject: Senate Joint Resolution 27

I want to let you know that I am in favor of Senate Joint Resolution 27 that sets a deadline for school funding reform. I live in Waukesha and am very concerned about my sons education in this school district. Because of the unfair funding formula, my school district has been forced to cut \$3 million or more a year in order to balance their budget. My sons in elementary school have now had all guidance counselors and librarians eliminated and class sizes have increased. Please support the Senate Joint Resolution 27. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Pam Ison
2836 Coventry Lane
Waukesha WI 53188
(262) 970-9550

Stromme, Denise

From: Rudy Senarighi [rsenarighi@charter.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 12:48 PM
To: Sen.Lehman
Subject: Senate Joint Resolution 27

Please know that I am in favor of SJR27 school funding reform. Last week the League of Women Voters of Door County held two public forums on this important issue. We examined how the current Wisconsin system for funding public schools has dramatically and negatively affected all five of the Door County school systems. I urge your committee to thoroughly examine alternatives to improve this system.
Shirley Senarighi
826 S. 16th Court
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

*Sara
hearing record.*

Stromme, Denise

From: Harlen & Georgia Menk [menks@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 1:06 PM
To: Sen. Lehman
Subject: Senate Joing Resolution 27

*Soca
Committee
hearing*

Senator Lahman,

Thank you for scheduling a hearing for Senate Joint Resolution 27 on Thursday. Coming up with a new system of funding schools is very critical.

What's at stake is our children's future and the future of our state and nation. At a time when American workers are facing increasing competition from abroad we cannot settle for mediocre school systems.

I cannot attend the hearing, but am sending you these comments. If appropriate you may forward them to the other members of the Education Committee.

The system of funding schools in Wisconsin is fundamentally flawed.

- The limits to the amount of revenue a school can raise is calculated on what it spent fourteen years ago. This makes no rational sense. The system should be based on the actual cost of educating our children, not on what was spent in 1993.
- It limits to 2 percent the annual tax increase school districts can raise without a special levi-cap override while, at the same time, requiring that teachers get an annual 3.8% increase in salary.
- The system ties the hands of local school boards, taking away local control and giving enormous power to the state government.

Annual slashing of spending has left the Ellsworth School with no more room to cut costs without chopping away at the meat and bone of our educational endeavors. Listed here are the cuts to the Ellsworth School Budget over the last seven years:

- 2001-2002 \$122,745
- 2002-2003 \$408,400
- 2003-2004 \$492,000
- 2004-2005 \$331,500
- 2005-2006 \$349,630
- 2006-2007 \$463,684
- TOTAL: \$2,167,955

The most recent cuts meant closing two of our four elementary schools. Ellsworth schools have lengthy school bus routes. With the price of gas skyrocketing, we cannot abide another year of budget cuts.

The State Legislature has the responsibility of providing the needed resource for our schools. Please come up with a new system of funding them, one based on the actual cost of educating our children.

Harlen Menk
Ellsworth, WI

Dauscher, Sara

From: Stromme, Denise
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 1:13 PM
To: Dauscher, Sara
Subject: FW: Senate Joint Resolution 27

From: Rudy Senarighi [mailto:rsenarighi@charter.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 12:48 PM
To: Sen.Lehman
Subject: Senate Joint Resolution 27

Please know that I am in favor of SJR27 school funding reform. Last week the League of Women Voters of Door County held two public forums on this important issue. We examined how the current Wisconsin system for funding public schools has dramatically and negatively affected all five of the Door County school systems. I urge your committee to thoroughly examine alternatives to improve this system.

Shirley Senarighi
826 S. 16th Court
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Stromme, Denise

From: John LaCourt [jlacourt@new.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 1:39 PM
To: Sen. Lehman
Subject: School Funding Reform

*Sara
for
committee
lead*

Senator Lehman,

I am e-mailing you in support of Senate Joint Resolution 27. As a school board member in the Marinette School District we are facing deficit spending for the third year because of the QEO and the revenue caps that have been placed on schools since 1993. Before 1993 Marinette was a conservative spending district and we have been suffering ever since, especially since our enrollment is declining and expenses have been increasing every year.

Cuts have been made to the point that anymore cuts will result in our students losing essential programs (we've lost enough already). We face a 680 million deficit this year and more the next year if the funding formula is not changed. As one board member, I absolutely refuse to be a party to more cuts resulting in our students receiving a sub par education when they will be facing a much more technological world than past generations have had to face.

The funding system needs to be fixed to enable every student in the state to receive an equal chance at a solid education. The future of our state and the nation depending upon this.

As a tax payer, I realize that the cost of educating our youth is enormous but I am willing to pay that price if this state and country are to face the challenges of the future.

It is my hope that you feel the same way and that you will convince others in Madison that the funding for public schools is antiquated and needs fixing as soon as possible. There has to be other sources of funding that do not overburden the tax payers yet provide for adequate funding for all public schools in the state.

The debate cannot go on much longer if we really wish to provide an adequate education for the youth of Wisconsin.

Thank you for allowing me to express my views.

John LaCourt

Marinette School Board member

Stromme, Denise

From: Cassie Cobb [cvcobb@new.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 2:56 PM
To: Sen.Lehman
Subject: School Funding Reform

Dear Senator Lehman,

I wanted to voice my support for SJR27. My children attend an excellent public school here in Appleton, but the continuous cutting of budgets is having a terrible effect on the system as a whole. I am part of a committee working on how to cut \$4 million from next years budget - believe me, there is not much left to cut!

The funding system of our schools desperately needs to be changed, or we face loosing our nationwide reputation as having an excellent school system. One of the reasons my husband and I moved here from Washington, DC was the quality of the public schools.

Thank you,
Cassie Cobb
Appleton, WI
920-993-4435

Stromme, Denise

From: Bechard, Steven B [SBECHAR1@amfam.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 3:11 PM
To: Sen.Lehman; Sen.Erpenbach; Sen.Hansen; Sen.Kreitlow; Sen.Olsen; Sen.Grothman; Sen.Lazich
Subject: Education Funding Reform hearing.

Dear Senators,

I am writing you, not as one of your constituents, but as the President of the Nekoosa Board of Education on behalf of 1400+ children. It has come to my attention that you will be holding a hearing on November 15th regarding Senate Joint Resolution 27. I apologize for my inability to attend that meeting.

I will keep my comments very brief.

You will likely hear from many during your hearing that the education funding system in our State is flawed and needs overhaul. The driving motivation for that perspective in the educational community is the perspective of a lack of funding. Our district has declining enrollment and we are feeling the pinch in our budget along with many other districts in the State. We would benefit from more funding, just as the others would.

But my suggestion for you is focused on the other component of this problem; out of control costs. Specifically, the contracts we have with our local teacher's unions and how those contracts are forcing us to increase our spending at a higher level than that of our revenue. That process is flawed and desperately needs your attention. By looking at the reported settlements around the state for this contract term, it's obvious that the QEO of 3.8%, even though it was intended to be the ceiling in negotiations, has ended up being the floor. The teachers know that they can maintain their benefits and still be relatively certain to get a 3.8% package increase. In a day when our local citizens are experiencing stagnant wages, reduced benefits, increased deductibles, and other radical changes to their compensation packages, our teachers are able to maintain their Cadillac benefits because of the handcuffs legislators have put on school boards.

Simply, the negotiation process is substantially slanted in the teachers favor and is the driving force behind out of control increases in expenditures. They are holding local school boards hostage in our spending. They realize that not agreeing to any changes in benefits or contract language results in a negative financial impact on the district. They are intentionally forcing us to attempt operating referendums or reduce the services we provide kids for their own self interests. Kid's are being affected at their expense.

The solution for this issue is quite simple; align the QEO limit with an individual districts overall increase in revenue. This will allow stagnated negotiations to result in a neither-side-wins position. Immediately, the playing field will be evened and negotiations will be done in good faith from both sides of the table. Teachers will be motivated to help reduce costs within their contracts as they will benefit from the cost savings.

Senators, the only way to control spending is to get all involved to understand the importance of doing just that, controlling spending. Collectively, our teachers are not on the side of balanced budgets and controlling taxes. They are still operating under the premise that more revenue is available if they exert enough pressure on us to provide it for them. And frankly, they're completely accurate in that thought. The current discrepancy between revenue caps and the QEO gives them the upper hand before we ever start. They know that every contract that gets settled above the revenue limit adds to the pressure on The Board.

We need your help, Senators. Our kids need your help! Force teachers to work with their respective school districts instead of against us.

Please feel free to contact me if you'd like specific examples of the situation I've discussed, if you have any ideas for us to correct our position, or if you would allow me the opportunity to meet with you individually to further discuss my thoughts and ideas on this issue.

Sincerely,

11/13/2007

Steve Bechard
President - Nekoosa Board of Education
715-423-6250

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Stromme, Denise

From: Parker family [jackpineflats@centurytel.net]
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2007 5:55 PM
To: Sen.Lehman
Subject: SJR27 support

Dear Senator Lehman,

As a para-educator in the Washburn Co. school district of Spooner, we know first hand how the funding formula has had an ill effect on students and families in our school.

Back in the spring of 2001 I watched the first of the lay-offs as 6 of my fellow para-educators were cut. Prior to this date our all-day kindergarten classrooms had a half-time teacher's assistant to help with our youngest and most vulnerable students. I have watched as fees have increased and programs have been scaled back or cut completely.

Much of this is due to declining enrollment and an aging facility which voters have been reluctant to replace because of the impact this would have on our property taxes. Our county's property values are high because there are so many vacation homes here, but those second-home residents don't want higher taxes and have little or no interest in the local economy or community. It is a paradox that has squeezed our district until there is not much life left.

Please know how much this joint resolution is needed for our school district ability to help kids.

Sincerely,

Diann Parker
W5515 Ross Rd.
Trego, WI 54888

11/14/2007