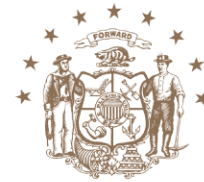




SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 16, 2019

Contact: Rep. Sondy Pope

608-266-3520

VOUCHER SCHOOLS INFLICT \$350 MILLION STRAIN ON TAXPAYERS

Public School Districts May Suffer Nearly **\$150** Million in Aid Reduction

MADISON, Wis. – The Department of Public Instruction recently released [enrollment numbers](#) for Wisconsin’s independent charter schools and private schools participating in the four state voucher programs. The Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP) and the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) saw the largest expansions growing by 55% and 37% respectively. The SNSP has no enrollment cap and the WPCP may expand by 1% of the prior year membership (since 2015-16) until it reaches 10% in 2025-26. Beginning in 2026-27 there will be no cap on enrollment. Representative Sondy Pope (D-Mt. Horeb), the ranking member on the Assembly Committee on Education responded:

“Taxpayers are now feeling the runaway effects of the law that Scott Walker and legislative Republicans passed to expand and lift these enrollment caps. It only gets worse from here. This unchecked expansion in Wisconsin is part of a growing national movement funded by the ultra-rich, pro-voucher lobby,” said Rep. Pope. **“As legislators, it is our duty to make the public aware that this subsidization of private, religious schools is not sustainable. These costs come out of their personal bank accounts and also taken from their children’s public schools.”**

These voucher programs are funded through reductions in general aid that would otherwise be paid to pupils’ districts of residence. The only way this aid can be recouped by districts is by raising local property tax. In addition, these voucher schools are [less accountable to the public and do not have to meet the same requirements as public schools.](#)

“\$350 million could have gone a long way in reimbursing public schools for their special education costs. Instead these resources are finding their way to for-profit operators under the guise of parental choice,” Rep. Pope said. **“While we often hear about parental choice, the fact of the matter is that an overwhelming majority of parents choose to send their children to public schools. That is where we should be concentrating our resources and our efforts.”**

###