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MEDIA RELEASE

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ACLU of Wisconsin Calls on Legislators to begin Exit Strategy for failed School Voucher Experiment

Milwaukee -- It is time to end the school voucher program in Milwaukee after years of failure. Today, in a letter the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin citing recent research urged the co-chairs of the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance to adopt an exit strategy for the voucher program. "If we continue to prop up failing schools by giving them taxpayer-funded vouchers we only make it harder and more expensive to undo the harm later," wrote ACLU of Wisconsin Executive Director Chris Ahmuty.

While recent reports from the School Choice Demonstration Project are not conclusive, "These reports confirm that more than 120, mostly small, Milwaukee schools that taxpayers support with tuition vouchers are performing at or below the levels achieved by comparable students attending Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)."

ACLU of Wisconsin's Ahmuty added, "We believe that the school voucher scheme has always been a distraction. Real improvement in our public schools has to provide an adequate education for all children across the state. We wrote the Joint Finance Committee co-chairs to get the Legislature to cut our losses and reallocate resources to where they will do the most good for our public schools."

Ahmuty added, "The voucher system has been particularly hard on Milwaukee's students of color because the racial gap in performance is widening compared to the rest of the nation. Legislators in Madison have to stop pretending vouchers are a legitimate response to conditions in the state largest city."

Ahmuty concluded, "Given the current financial pressure on our educational system, we don't have the luxury of continuing a failed experiment that may look good to some, but doesn't deliver for tomorrow's citizens, workers and families."

The letter to Joint Finance Committee co-chairs Miller and Pocan is attached.

