



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **ACLU of Wisconsin Opposes Proposed Mayoral Takeover of Milwaukee Public Schools, Calls on Elected Officials to Focus on Adequacy**

For Immediate Release, January 4, 2010

Contact: Christopher Ahmuty, Executive Director, 414-272-4032 x 13

Milwaukee -- The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin will submit testimony at the Senate Education Committee hearing on January 5, opposing the proposed mayoral takeover of the Milwaukee Public Schools.

According to ACLU Executive Director Chris Ahmuty, the proposal to give MPS governance to the mayor is just another scheme that won't remedy Wisconsin's failure to provide an adequate education to far too many of Milwaukee's children.

Rather than spending time and effort to push through a controversial takeover program, the governor, mayor and state legislators need to comply with the state Constitutional obligation to ensure that all Milwaukee children have the opportunity to obtain a meaningful, adequate education.

Persons who are genuinely concerned about student performance need to evaluate what programs and services help students succeed, and what special programs and services are needed for children living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, limited English proficient children, and children with disabilities - and then ensure that MPS has the resources to implement those programs.

They also must address the reality that thousands of Milwaukee children attend taxpayer-supported private voucher schools – most of which perform no better than MPS. Yet neither the takeover proposal nor any other plan has been offered to improve education for those 21,000 Milwaukee children.

The primary constitutional responsibility for the education of Milwaukee's children rests with the State of Wisconsin. The state needs to put adequate resources into the public school system to provide the educational services and supports those children need. It needs to ensure that the per-pupil funding for Milwaukee Public Schools students is at least comparable to that of suburban districts. It needs to phase out voucher and charter schools that are not performing, and impose the same accountability requirements on any schools that remain. Those are the reforms that will help Milwaukee students succeed.

A copy of the ACLU's testimony is attached.