



May 4, 2011

Senator Alberta Darling  
Room 317 East  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI  
Via fax to 608-267-0588

Representative Robin Vos  
Room 309 East  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI  
Via fax to 608-282-3663

Dear Co-Chairs Darling and Vos:

On May 5, 2011 the Joint Committee on Finance is scheduled to hold an executive session on Assembly Bill 92 and Assembly Bill 94 both of which relate to the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP). Majorities of the Assembly Committee on Education recently recommended passage of both bills.

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin and its members across Wisconsin, I urge you to reject these recommendations.

The arguments for and against eliminating the MPCP's enrollment cap and expanding the program to allow any private school in Milwaukee County to choose to participate (AB92) are well known. You probably know that the ACLU of Wisconsin has for a long time held that the MPCP is a failed scheme that should be shut down and not expanded. Given the deep cuts that have been proposed in school aids across Wisconsin, including the Milwaukee Public Schools, it is unconscionable for you to allow this failed program to waste even more taxpayer dollars.

Assembly Bill 94 makes a number of cosmetic changes to the MPCP. It is revealing that after years of sham payments using checks made out to the pupil's parents but sent to the private school, this bill allows tax dollars to be sent for all voucher pupils at a school in a single check. It is more honest to drop the former deceitful practice.

Assembly Bill 94 also amends the statutory requirement governing a limited financial audit of a private school's participation in MPCP. The amendment requires that the audits are in accordance with the auditing standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). Most not-for-profit organizations have their audits for most purposes done in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) set by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB), not AICPA. It is unclear whether or not this proposal would be better than DPI's current standards; much

less satisfy the public's legitimate interest in knowing that tax dollars are being used as the recipients claim. Once again given the deep cuts proposed for school aids in our state, we believe that you should be clearer about how you will make private schools accountable for the tax dollars they receive.

Please reject both Assembly Bills 92 and 94.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Christopher Ahmuty  
Executive Director