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SB 652/ AB 688 : Independent Charter School Funding

Current law requires DPI to reduce each school district's equalization aid by an amount equal to the total per pupil payments paid to independent charter schools for children living in their district (regardless of whether the child had ever attended public schools). This bill eliminates those reductions over a period of 12 years. Funding would instead be paid through GPR funds.

SB 838: Voucher School Funding

This is a parallel bill similarly impacting the Racine and Wisconsin Parental Choice Programs and the Special Needs Scholarship Program.

Note that the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program is already on a path to move the funding away from reductions in equalization payments to MPS and onto GPR.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin (LWVWI) has historically endorsed a position stating:

Charter school authority given only to K-12 public school districts to maintain Wisconsin's commitment to local control of K-12 public education.

A system of school choice within the public school system, but which does not include any tax dollars being given to private or religious schools.

A requirement of all institutions or organizations that receive public funds for K-12 education to meet the same requirements as public schools, including:

- *accounting for the use of public funds;*
- *meeting performance standards for their students;*
- *meeting the same state standards for all school employees.*

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin supported the lawsuit against vouchers which included a claim that the current funding method, removing funds from the public education budgets, was unconstitutional under the Wisconsin Constitution, Art. VIII Section 1.

These bills appear to be an attempt to cure this constitutional issue. Although the bills may make the programs less unconstitutional, they do not address the primary concerns the LWVWI has with voucher and independent charter programs. The bills do not go far enough to cure the problem of public funds going to private schools, with few requirements or regulations, contrary to the League's long held position.

For this reason, LWVWI cannot support these bills.