



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF  
WISCONSIN

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January 14, 2015

To: Assembly Committee on Education

Re: Opposition to Assembly Bill 1

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin supports policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children. Indeed, the League recognizes that “quality” and “equality” are inseparable principles in public education.

The League urges you to oppose AB 1, in particular for the following reasons:

- The League believes there should be substantial control of school programs and personnel by the local school district, and a fundamental activity of most of our 17 local Leagues has been to conduct a study of their local school system. AB 1 addresses many complicated matters, and it deserves input from the local elected officials who are responsible for education in their communities. This legislation should certainly not be fast-tracked.
- The League believes that charter school authority should be given only to K-12 public school districts to maintain Wisconsin’s commitment to local control. The proposal to require charter school conversion for underachieving schools is antithetical to the principle of public school improvement. Rather than allow the school to become less accountable, the focus should be on improvement.
- The League opposes any efforts to divert tax dollars from our public schools to private schools. Further, we believe that any institution or organization that receives public funds for K-12 education should be required 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.

Studies have failed to show that the voucher system in Milwaukee has provided children a better educational option than they would have received in their public schools. In addition, the Legislative Audit Bureau found last year that most of the vouchers in the recent expansion of the program went to families whose children were already in private schools. Clearly, taking funding from public school budgets – which are already suffering from cuts – and diverting it to private schools that are not publicly accountable and families who do not have children in the public schools is *not* a solution to the challenges our schools and families face.

Thank you.