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[00:00:00] Senator Darling. Senator J. Senator Vau. Here. Senator Larsson Here. Matthew. Okay. Um, the rest of the senators will be here. Um, judge Leah. Oh, Leah's not gonna be here? No. Okay. Senator Vme will not be here from what I understand. Um, they will be coming and probably going, uh, throughout the day because I assume we'll be here for a while.

[00:00:26] Um, what we will be hearing today is Senate Bill 20 in this order, Senate Bill 34, and Senate Bill 22. If you'd like to speak or register, please, um, fill out a, uh, white, uh, hearing notice slip, and then give it to the pages so that we can, um, get all the folks who'd like to speak or, um, register. And if you have, um, comments that you'd like just prepared, uh, written statements, you can do that too and leave those [00:01:00] with us and we will hand those out to the committee members.

[00:01:03] Um, what I hear is we're on Wisconsin Eye today and we're live. So, um, when you come up to testify, please speak into the mic. We will be only taking testimony today. We will not be voting on anything at all. We're just here to, to, uh, listen to the public, uh, take comments and ideas so that, uh, we can work on these bills and, uh, uh, in, in the future.

[00:01:27] And then we will be voting at a different time with a number of folks. Normally I don't do this, but with a number of folks that are here today, I think we're going to, um, uh, impose the three minute rule so that people get a chance to talk. Otherwise, we'll go on forever and, and that's not fair to folks who are here and have to leave.

[00:01:48] Also, I would just hand a note that, uh, room 4 25 Southwest and 400 Southeast are the overflow rooms. And so I don't know what that, what you, I, I think you can [00:02:00] hear, I don't know if you can see anything in there. Can you see? Just here? Okay. There. Um, unfortunately, um, Senator Darling had a car issue this morning, so she is going to be late, but we're gonna start no matter what, because I think it's important that you're all here and that we, uh, we not, um, delay any longer.

[00:02:20] So what we will be doing is when she gets here, then she will have an opportunity to testify on the bill. But I, uh, we'll start out this morning and what we'll do is we will go, uh, for and against, for and against, for and against all day long so that we, uh, spread out, um, the folks so that, you know, people are for it.

[00:02:38] Don't get to talk first and people who are against the bill talk last, that's not really right. So, um, we will split it, uh, for and against, or if you'd like to speak for informational purposes only, you're welcome to do that also. So, um, Sarah, do you want to call the first folks up to testify and they'll be speaking in favor then?

[00:02:58] We'll go to the folks, the next [00:03:00] group that, or folks that are opposed. And then when Senator Darling gets here, we'll have her jump right in and, uh, speak. What one of the things that we, we do in, uh, hearings in the Capitol is we know show no signs of support or opposition by clapping or booing or cheering or whatever.

[00:03:18] So we're here to listen, um, to folks. What will happen is, uh, when you're done testifying, if the committee so desires, um, they will be able to ask you some questions, uh, on your testimony for clarity and, and things like that. So, uh, Sarah, are you ready? Yes. Okay. Um, Sarah wants us to call the people that are on and the people on deck.

[00:03:41] Okay. But right. What we will do is we'll call the, the people who are speaking next and then the folks on deck, so you know that you're next. Okay. So we're gonna start with Paul. Am I not on? Okay. We're gonna start with Paul Vorn Holt and Elaine Miller from the City of Milwaukee. And [00:04:00] then she wanted me to say the next four people.

[00:04:03] So the people on deck are Mike Langel, Dennis Conta, Jill Gaskell, and Heather Heand. Good morning.

[00:04:19] Good morning, Charleson. I'm Paul Warhold from the Intergovernmental Relations Division for the City of Milwaukee. And with me is Elaine Miller, who's a real estate manager with our Department of City Development. And we're happy to appear for before you today on Senate Bill 20. Um, Senate Bill 20 will allow this city to use its real estate expertise to make a more holistic approach to the management of these assets by addressing the needs and concerns of neighborhoods where buildings stand vacant, as well as better meeting the educational needs of our residents and other uses for neighborhood communities.

[00:04:49] The status of vacant school property is very concerning to the city. Neighborhoods are concerned that once thriving parts of their community now sit barren and quiet, that high quality tradition, non-traditional schools who are interested in these [00:05:00] properties are shut out of the process. Milwaukee taxpayers are spending millions to maintain the unused real estate.

[00:05:06] And lastly, when the school district has declined to sell or lease buildings to competing schools, those schools seek rezoning of industrial and, um, commercial parcels to build for their purposes, which is not in the city's best interest.

[00:05:21] But I want to emphasize this policy will not shut out. M p s. Both the mayor and the Common Council are already, uh, charged with working with them in the disposition of m p s real estate and will continue to do so. This just basically recognizes the unique relationship that currently m p s has with the city, and that the city owns the buildings.

[00:05:39] But M P Ss is charged with the disposition, and I'd like, uh, Elaine Miller from our Department of City development in order to keep with your time limits to talk about why we think our real estate expertise, uh, can be better used on behalf of the taxpayers of the city. Good morning. The Department of City development is the, has acted as real estate agent for m p s.

[00:05:58] We have helped with buying sites [00:06:00] and we help with selling those properties. Um, and we hope we will continue that cooperative arrangement. Um, but under this bill, we do have some advantages. One, I think it would be for any buyers of property that they will have just a single entity that they have to seek approval rather than going to both n p s and the Common Council.

[00:06:18] It's just before the common council and for the initial sale, or if they're modifications, it's just an easier process for the buyers. And the other is that the Department of City Development, um, brings a broader perspective to these transactions. We, you know, rather than just looking at these in terms of price alone, we look at the broad, broader project, the whole investment, and what the use brings to those neighborhoods.

[00:06:41] So bringing those resources to the project, um, I think will, will benefit both parties if there have any questions? Any questions? Sure. Senator. Thank you. Chairman Nelson. I, I'm from far western Wisconsin, so I need to get educated on Milwaukee. Tell me why hasn't [00:07:00] the school district sold the property already?

[00:07:02] Why, why did, why does this bill have to happen? Maybe can you gimme a little background on why this is happening? Um, well, I won't speak for N P s. All I'll speak to is that there have been certain, um, situations where the city has been

interested in prop in properties and gaining use of a vacant property that's been underutilized or vacant for some time.

[00:07:23] And it's just been, um, because it's charged with the school board's authority, I think that there are, um, uh, resistances to giving up those buildings, um, because they fear that it might be used for another, um, non-traditional M P Ss use that might be in competition with m p s.

[00:07:45] Any other questions? Sorry, that was a, a, a question. One of the things that concerns me is, um, the bill says that it can't be used or, or they can, it can be sold if it's, uh, unused or un under underutilized for 18 consecutive months.

[00:08:00] One of the things that concerns me a little bit in this is we have to make sure that they may have not used it for 18 months, but things change.

[00:08:07] And are, are we at all concerned? And this is probably a, well, I don't see the school board testifying here, but concerned that. Things change and all of a sudden now we need the building and you sold it. I, I guess my, my response to that would be we chose the 18 months because it not only covers a budget year, but it covers a calendar year for both purposes.

[00:08:28] Um, so that 18 months, um, we also know that there's many, um, buildings that qualify already, um, beyond that, that will have quite a stock to deal with. Um, and then the further safeguard is, remember the common council still, um, by resolution, um, is involved in selling the property and the use because of zoning.

[00:08:49] This simply transfers kind of the one-stop shopping to market the property. Councilmen and the mayor are not going to do anything to undermine the mission of M P Ss. They're inextricably linked to the [00:09:00] success of the city. So in regards to if, if the m p s makes a case that they need this building for the, for the success of the institution, there's no one on the common council or the mayor that's going to undermine that effort.

[00:09:11] Okay. Uh, Senator Gman? Yeah, I, I recently did run into somebody from West Bend who does some maintenance down there and, you know, people are always worried about the supposedly tough budget and they, of course, brought up to me all the money that they were spending wasting, you know, maintaining properties that were empty.

[00:09:29] Do you have any idea how much that, uh, MPS's policy of not selling these schools is costing the city that could be better spent on children? I, I won't give you a cost figure. All I can cite is two years ago, the McKinsey Group did a study, um, and it basically said that, um, the institution, the infrastructure, um, is being maintained for 95,000 plus students.

[00:09:52] And the current enrollment is just around, I believe, um, I'm sorry, enrollment from nearly 93 to just under 73 over the [00:10:00] last past 10 years. So there's an excess capacity of seating of over 20,000, but you have no idea how much money is not gonna cost. If that would be MPS maintenance. Right. I You'd have to ask M P Ss that, that too.

[00:10:11] Okay. Yes. I would like to add that we are working to sell a number of properties. We have one property under option at the moment to be converted for senior housing. We are preparing to advertise several other properties for, for probably for alternate use. So we, there is a process to sell those properties.

[00:10:28] But you have no, is, are some of these properties, if they sold them, like for senior housing, are they gonna light up on the tax rolls? Yes. That will be a taxable investment. And, and right now you gotta pay to heat the buildings. You gotta pay to maintain the buildings. You might have electricians in there, plumbers in there, and such.

[00:10:42] Sure, I, they do maintain 'em at a minimal level, but they do, um, make sure that things are, um, maintained amazing how much extra money m p s has. Thanks. Okay. Bob, do you have a question or? I, okay. Okay. Um, thank you very much for your testimony, sir.[00:11:00]

[00:11:02] Okay. Mike Lal speaking against from M T E A. From M T E A speaking against Good morning. Good morning.

[00:11:18] Uh, my name is Mike Lingel. I'm a president and proud member of the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association. I'm speaking in opposition to this bill. I started to attend, uh, Milwaukee Public Schools over 53 years ago, and I went to Story School and I started teaching 35 years ago at Washington High School.

[00:11:36] And at the time, I was a student as well as an educator, beginning educator. We had a vibrant public education system that, uh, is under attack now, like it never has been before. Uh, I believe the attempts to get rid of Milwaukee Public Schools is part of a broader plan to dismantle public education in Milwaukee.

[00:11:58] Uh, right now we have [00:12:00] 120,000 school-aged children in Milwaukee. 80,000 are gonna be attending Milwaukee Public Schools. And if the plans go forward with all of these bills, and in particular with Bill 20, uh, we will end up with, in the future 60, maybe 40,000 students attending public education. In other words, this is part of a broader scheme to dismantle public education in Milwaukee public education and all education is the anvil upon which democracy is forged, and we are moving in a direction in this state where we're moving away from democratic institutions, away from fairness and away for opportunities.

[00:12:39] I spent over 30 years as a classroom teacher, as a high school math teacher, and the Milwaukee Public schools are the last and only choice for so many of our students. Irrespective of what they say about the vouchers, irrespective of what they say about the charter schools, there will be no chance for all kids.

[00:12:59] If you [00:13:00] dismantle our public school system, we are opposed to selling our schools. We are opposed to charters. We are opposed to vouchers. We are in favor of our students. We are in favor of our students having a quality of life outside of school as well as in school. So I urge you to oppose this bill.

[00:13:18] Thank you. Just a, a, a question, um, we understand, and we'll hear the numbers in a minute, and we sort of heard it, you know, M P S S spends a lot of money on empty buildings that have been empty for a long time. I mean, is it really fiscally prudent to keep stuff that you haven't used for a number of years and are spending money that could be spent on education, on schools that, you know, enrollment is down across the state for whatever reason.

[00:13:47] Isn't there anything that you think the school district should do with these buildings? I mean, the district, depending lots of money keeping 'em up. The district will be, uh, speaking, uh, soon to those particular interests. Okay. [00:14:00] I will tell you this, that, uh, class sizes across the district are enormous At the high school level.

[00:14:07] It's not unusual. They have 30 or 35, 40 or 45 students in a classroom. Whereas we do have capacity issues. At the same time we have overcrowded classrooms. And the real issue before us is putting forward a sensible plan so that the Milwaukee public schools are available for the students. I think we're going in the wrong direction, and if this is allowed to continue next year, there'll be 60,000 students in the following year, there'll be 40,000 students, and it'll be those young people that no one wants.

[00:14:43] There are people behind the scenes that do believe in the bell curve and they wanna see it played out in Milwaukee. Okay. Any questions? Oh, Senator joke.

[00:14:54] Excuse me. Yeah, thank you very much for your testimony. As I listened very carefully, [00:15:00] I thought you were speaking in opposition to SB 22 and the budget bill, and that would not be appropriate. Um, well, I, I think the arguments apply because those are factors that contribute to the decline in attendance and the, and, and the, uh, uh, defunding of public education, uh, demonization of public education.

[00:15:21] But the, I live in a district where there's an awful lot of older school buildings, and you reach a point where some of them are at a, a point where you cannot efficiently maintain those buildings. It simply is not cost effective. It, it, it doesn't, doesn't in fact, the chairperson Olson's comment, I mean, should we not be prudent with the scarce use of tax dollars to make sure that the money is going to maintain the buildings that are being utilized to its maximum?

[00:15:55] Because frankly, under revenue controls today, even those are gonna be cut. So wouldn't you rather [00:16:00] have that money go to making sure that those buildings don't decay and deteriorate rather than putting money into buildings that are basically empty warehouses? I believe that is absolutely correct, but I believe in the stewardship of the Milwaukee Public School System School Board, they're elected by the citizens of Milwaukee, and I think they're the ones that ought to be entrusted with that.

[00:16:20] Uh, again, you are correct that, uh, there has been a plan, a plan in place. To, uh, drive students, drive families away from the Milwaukee public schools. And what we find right now, we have schools such as Webster Middle School and Morris Middle School, that are just wonderful buildings that are closed right now.

[00:16:38] And what we have to do is have a sensible plan for how we're gonna utilize those buildings. But as long as we've been operating under a plan to essentially dismantle public education, and this upcoming year, what's gonna happen is with the funding cuts, it, uh, is going to drive people away from the public schools.

[00:16:58] We think it's time to step back [00:17:00] and have a meaningful approach to public education in the city of Milwaukee. That includes, as you mentioned, not only the use of the buildings, but the charters and the vouchers and everything else. We're gonna end up in a situation a few years down the road where

you will not have public education, just like you won't have adequate healthcare or housing for our students as a classroom teacher.

[00:17:20] Uh, and in fact, I just have this one anecdote. Uh, I was, um, uh, doing some work for the AP test that we gave, and you got reduced amount of fees for students who were on free or reduced lunch. And I was, it was a Friday and I was rushing through trying to get all these forms filled out, and I went through the full, a reduced, partial reduced, and then we had a, uh, a page on our, at our school where we had homeless kids.

[00:17:45] And I just stopped there for a second. At my high school, we had 42 kids who were homeless. So those are the social issues that really, uh, press against our district. And those are the things that we need to address, but we have to do it holistically. And we have to [00:18:00] start with a commitment to public education, and we have to start with a commitment to our kids and trying to pass these bills piecemeal here are not the appropriate way of doing it.

[00:18:09] We have to make a commitment to public education in Milwaukee. We have to make a commitment to our students. Go ahead. Yeah. I, I admire your commitment to education. You and I have, many of us in this committee have no disagreement at all for your passion. I think you're choosing the wrong bill. I, the charter school bill, the state budget bill, the budget repair bill, the list goes on.

[00:18:34] I, I'm concerned about our inability to pay for school facilities where kids are in those rooms, in those buildings. And so it's hard for me as a legislator to think that we are spending money on empty space that could rather be spent committing to these kids who you and I, all of us, some of us care very deeply about.[00:19:00]

[00:19:00] And if we are not, if we're not invest, if we're, if you're putting money into hitting an empty building, that's not helping the child learn more, uh, in another school facility down the block. And so I, I, I think you've got to be very careful, uh, because you're training your credibility when you're. You, you should be putting all your energy into those other three bills.

[00:19:22] Not on this one. This is one where the tax dollars can go to helping kids learn. We share that view. My point simply is that it is the public school system and the school board. I believe that they ought to be the entity to make that decision. And we are together in the fact that we do not wanna waste money heating buildings that, uh, ought not be heated or keeping old buildings up there is

absolutely, we have unity on that, but the entity that ought to do that is the public school system.

[00:19:52] And, uh, that's where we stand. Okay. Thank you very much for your test. Oh, Glen, did you have a question? Yeah, just, just wondered, what is the health [00:20:00] insurance you guys carry at NM p s Glen Health Insurance? Glenn, that's not, that's not nothing to do with this bill. Um, okay. Thank you. Well, we're, we're talking about this bill.

[00:20:12] Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you. Um, Senator Darling, are you here? And ready? And I Okay, thank you. Sorry we started without you, but as you can see, we have a number of folks here that would like to testify and we think it's important that we start as close to on time as we can.

[00:20:35] Okay. That's okay.

[00:20:50] Welcome Representative Dale. Hello, chairman. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Uh, representative Dale and I are testifying on SSB 20 and I, I thank you very much for [00:21:00] your patience with me. I guess having a car with 165,000 miles, you have to look at whether you're gonna make it to Madison every day. So I'm really sorry it took me so long to get here.

[00:21:11] I wanna say I appreciate your having this hearing on three education bills, and I wanna put it into context of this. This is for public education to make sure that we can use our, our tax dollars for education in the best way PO possible. And I thank you Senator Ju for alluding to that. This bill is in the best interest of not only the taxpayers, but for education, for, uh, all of our children.

[00:21:38] And when I was working on this, uh, bill with, um, looking at M P s and the, the empty buildings that were around the district that were really great buildings that could be used for schools, other kinds of public schools or other kinds of schools, it was brought to my attention by a constituent who, who is very much, um, a, a [00:22:00] founder of, uh, Milwaukee College Prep, which is a, a charter school and which is nationally renowned.

[00:22:06] And, um, he told me that. They were trying to buy a school, a beautiful school, right in the middle of a, a neighborhood where that school building existed and it was empty. It was on, uh, like 33rd street. And he said, you know, we tried to get this building for a couple of years, and we kept, kept getting, kept getting different messages from m p s about whether it was available or not.

[00:22:32] Eventually they couldn't get it. And Milwaukee College Prep is one of the best schools, um, in the country. A lot of the most, all the children are low income. All the children end up graduating from high school and going on to higher ed. And it's been a national model. So when we looked at the other empty buildings and when I was working on it, uh, president Hines from the com, the common council called me and said, I think we're working on the same [00:23:00] thing.

[00:23:00] And so let's work on it together. We need, you know, we need to get these school, these schools into hands where we get, um, you know, security and we're not paying for the maintenance of it, and it's gonna be best for the taxpayer and best for students if we can use these buildings in another way. So we team together and I think you heard the testimony in favor from the Common Council, and that's where we are.

[00:23:22] It's a very simple bill and, uh, look forward to having representative, uh ha Dell speak as well. Well, thank you Chairman Olsson and thank you Senator Darling. I, I am here today to support the, uh, Senate on the assembly side of this bill. Uh, quite honestly, I think Senator J summed it up real well in regards just to SSB 20, this is a mechanical bill that simply saves money, puts money back into the school district, and gets kids educated.

[00:23:53] I do wanna say why this bill caught my eye, and that's simply because my brother was, um, like second from the [00:24:00] top in facilities management for N P S. And I've been hearing this story for years. This is not a new issue. Some of these buildings have been sitting around for 10, 15 years, vacant, requiring maintenance costs.

[00:24:13] So it's just a wise thing to do. And I think as you get into this, the selling of these buildings, the second thing you'll have to figure out is what to do with all the extra equipment, computers, desks, chairs. But that's another issue for another day. So I'm here to support SB 20 and my Santa Companion.

[00:24:30] Thank you. A, a question, um, this bill, from what I can understand and correct me if I'm wrong, does not limit who the city could sell the building for. It doesn't put any priorities. So, you know, the, the goal is to get the highest price for the thing, whether it's, you know, to get it back on the tax rolls for somebody decides, I wanna put a restaurant in there, I wanna put a whatever in there.

[00:24:55] It, it doesn't limit them who they can sell it for, correct. Yeah. But in the, [00:25:00] in all due respect, the city of Milwaukee has its goal to secure its

neighborhoods and to have empty buildings sitting in very vulnerable neighborhoods contributes to, um, the impression that things aren't going well in those neighborhoods and their interest in, in education to get more people to graduate so they can have a more skilled workforce is definitely on their priority and, and safety to secure those buildings so that they're, they're used and maintained and have a presence secures safety for the area, which is really key.

[00:25:34] And for the taxpayer, it's, it's a, a good idea that they're not paying for empty buildings. Okay. Senator do? Yeah. Thank you both, both very much. Um, two things. Uh, in the previous testimony, um, Mr I thinks long longly, or I didn't quite get the name, but Langley Langley, yeah. Um, suggested that [00:26:00] he wanted, huh?

[00:26:01] Lal Lal. I'm sorry, I couldn't read that. Okay. I thought it was another person. Sorry, I couldn't read it. Um, he's got handwriting like mine. Mike, me too. Um, the, he suggested that the school board ought to have some involvement. Would you be adverse to considering some kind of involvement from the school board, whether it's a school plan or whether they would talk about how they'd utilize the money as part of a maintenance effort to make sure that we're maintaining buildings?

[00:26:34] Well, we're always up for any constructive criticism to make the bill stronger. So, of course, the, the second thing I, uh, I wanted to point out, one of the biggest mistakes we have made in Wisconsin is that we have not enabled school boards to set up an annual maintenance fee in order to assure that they continue to invest in keeping buildings up to date.

[00:26:57] And what has suffered in the last [00:27:00] 20 years, 30 years, has been the bricks and mortar failure to adequately upkeep these buildings. They've deteriorated, and then the cost to repair them is significantly better. Then you have this huge referendum cost. Sometimes they vote against it, then it's even more expensive.

[00:27:16] So is it, you would, do you envision the money from the sale of these buildings going into a onetime maintenance cost for other buildings? Because these are not, you sell a building once you get the dollars and you can't, you can only use it once. Is that how you, you would envision the utilization so it would go into some kind of a maintenance program?

[00:27:38] Well, that's gonna have to be up to the city because the city owns the buildings. Right. And, and then, you know, N P Ss, uh, Uses 'em. And so it's sort, it's the only relationship in the state. It's my understanding that a school district right, has such a relationship and a municipality having such an unusual relationship.

[00:27:57] So I think that those relationships need to [00:28:00] be worked out with the city, but ultimately it's the city's buildings and, you know, they, they're the ones who are just, just looking at the bill here. It says that the money is supposed to be deposited in the school operations fund and are to be applied to reduce taxes levied by the city for m p s.

[00:28:15] So really, you're, you're, you're saying that the school can't use the money for what Senator Jocko's talking about's just to reduce taxes? Is that something that can be, we could work on, work on, but again, I wanna put the authority where it should be as well as the city of Milwaukee owns those buildings.

[00:28:32] If I, if I could follow up and I wanna be an advocate for the taxpayers too, because we're paying for empty buildings. I, I, if I can follow up though. Sure. It was, what, about 10 or 12 years ago that we provided special authorization for the Milwaukee School District to build several new neighborhood schools, right.

[00:28:53] Without referendum. Right. I wish we had that same option available to every school district in the state, [00:29:00] but it was done so because there was a realization that buildings were overcrowded, you needed to emphasize neighborhood schools, and that these buildings had not been adequately maintained over the years, there'd just been a complete deterioration of them because the money was going into reducing the levy, not investing in the maintenance of the building.

[00:29:19] So I would think if we truly want it to be invested, to make sure these buildings don't lose value, that this be amended so that we give them the authority to use the money to up, up, upgrade, maintain other school facilities. As, as both of you indicated in your testimony, both of you said, you agreed with me.

[00:29:43] Well, I'm presuming the money goes in to help maintain the buildings. So, well, again, I, if I could make a comment again, the buildings are owned by the city of Milwaukee. We're talking about buildings that are empty. We're not talking about the whole m p [00:30:00] s capital maintenance budget. We're talking about empty buildings, which as you know, in neighborhoods, when buildings stand empty, it's, it's a real scar on a neighborhood.

[00:30:10] And that's part of, of Milwaukee's issue. They, they, they want, they want to upgrade the image, they want to upgrade the, the neighborhood safety. They wanna upgrade neighborhoods in general so that Milwaukee can be the most vital place, uh, to live, work, and, and play. You know, so it, it doesn't fit their goal to have empty building sitting there for years.

[00:30:34] I, I would just like to chime in, Senator, that I don't know if it's totally accurate to say that there were no maintenance budget for these buildings. 'cause there was. You know, I, I think the problem comes in, they were sitting empty, and of course, N P Ss is gonna focus on the, the schools that are, have kids in them more than they will focus on the empty buildings.

[00:30:54] But they still, I know from my conversations with my brother, they still had to maintain 'em and make sure heating and [00:31:00] everything was not, you know, going awry or whatever, and keeping the roofs from leaking and so maintenance was going on. Sure. Yeah. It's over a million dollars a year for these empty buildings.

[00:31:10] The, the, the, I think we're in the heat of an agreement on the empty buildings. Yeah. Where there seems to be, what do we do with the money, where it is, where the money goes? And do you make sure that you don't allow the existing buildings to deteriorate? And we seem to have a disconnect in terms of what some of us are saying and what you may be saying.

[00:31:27] I I, it was 18 years ago that I chaired the Aging Schools Committee, in which we identified hundreds of school buildings in the state that were inadequately maintained because roof repair was put off for five or six years, and then the roof became so bad, it began leaking that caused other kinds of electrical problems, et cetera.

[00:31:48] That's happening today under revenue controls. You have to admit that people are, for school districts are foregoing some of these basic maintenance issues, and then it becomes far [00:32:00] more expensive to fix them a little bit later. You talked of your car, if you don't I do maintain my car. I always get my oil.

[00:32:08] Well, Senator Joe, we're, we're sort of having, but anyway, I think, I think we, I think we know we're going the, we need to, I don't wanna take, I agree with you that we have huge maintenance issues for, for many of our schools around the state. This is not what this bill is about. This is about the fact that there are empty buildings.

[00:32:25] There's, it's a million dollars a year to maintain them. The city of Milwaukee wants something to happen to them because they don't think this is fair to the taxpayer. It's not fair to the neighborhoods. And this issue has been on the table and, uh, I welcome any of your input to make it a better bill.

[00:32:43] But the issue is the city of Milwaukee owns the buildings. They want to be able to sell them. And if there are ways to, you know, fine tune this bill. I welcome that, but I'm not, this bill isn't taking on all the capital projects for m p s or any other part of the state. And I agree with you. It's a big [00:33:00] issue.

[00:33:00] Senator Vold, thank you. I, my question was, okay. Thank you very much. Thank you.

[00:33:10] I'm gonna switch. Oh, did, did you have a question? Oh, okay. Excuse me. Albert. Senator Larsson has a question. I didn't see him. Um, thank you, Senator Darling, did you have a chance to see the amendments, um, that I'm gonna be putting forward on this? I haven't. You haven't? Okay. There's two and they kind of go to the heart of what Senator Zou was talking about in making sure that the money, uh, that is raised from the sale of these buildings goes to m p s general revenue, um, so that they're able to use it for best served needs.

[00:33:45] Obviously MPS is, um, they've had, you know, crisis funding and otherwise in the last few years. So that's the first one. The second one is about, um, who pays for the maintenance right now? Um, even if they go into this city of [00:34:00] Milwaukee's, control, N P S S is required to pay for any maintenance, um, that they have.

[00:34:05] So, um, I don't wanna put you on the spot, but I just wanted to give you a heads up that those are coming. Sure. And, um, if I, I know you welcome the opportunity to improve 'em, so I'd hope that, um, you'd, you'd take those to heart. Sure. And why don't we sit down with the City of Milwaukee and M P Ss and, and work this out.

[00:34:20] I welcome. That sounds good. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. That's it now. Okay. Okay. Thank you. Come on back up here. Jill Gaskell from the Wisconsin P t a speaking against you wanna say a couple lawsuit?

[00:34:43] Good morning. Wisconsin. P t a does not support Senate Bill 20. If it directs, if it creates direct competition to Milwaukee public school system. M p s is a, a entity supported by taxpayer dollars. It's [00:35:00] unfair to the people of

Milwaukee or to the entire state for that matter, to sell this property to an entity that will open a school in direct competition with m p s.

[00:35:10] Wisconsin. P t a is in favor of selling the property to a redeveloper or a charter school that will come under the umbrella of Milwaukee public schools. This school would have the same oversight as any other school in N P Ss, and the taxpayers can see where their money is going. This is not a case with the voucher schools or the independent charters.

[00:35:31] The taxpayers cannot see the results of what their money is being spent on. Also, by selling these properties to another school, it keeps this property off the tax rolls, so the city gets no benefit from it. If the property is sold, it should be to a nonprofit group that will benefit the people and the city of Milwaukee, or to a commercial business that will pay property taxes on the property.

[00:35:53] Okay. Any questions? I do support. I, I, I like the idea of it going to a maintenance fund, [00:36:00] um, and I like the idea of having the school board have some say as to who it sold to. Okay. Any questions? Thank you very much for your testimony, sir.

[00:36:13] Okay, so next up we have Dennis Conta from the Milwaukee Charter School. So advocates, I'm sorry. And then I'm gonna just read the next four names. Um, we have Will Gruber from the West. Well, I'll just read the names Will Gruber, Heather Haviland, Cheryl Brenner, and Henry Tyson. Good morning, uh, Senator Ellison and, uh, members of the Committee of Dennis Conta.

[00:36:41] I'm the Executive director of the, was of the Milwaukee Charter School Advocates. I think, uh, I feel compelled to say, uh, or clarify something that needs to be clarified, frankly. Senator Olson through all three hearings today. Charter schools are public schools. They are not voucher schools. [00:37:00] We are hold accountable because we are funded with public money.

[00:37:03] We take public tests, we have public certified teachers. We are accountable to the Department of Public Construction. I'm here today, uh, representing the 9,000 students who attend 27 independent charter schools in the city of Milwaukee. Our biggest obstacle to grow and develop quality charter schools in the city of Milwaukee is the lack of facilities.

[00:37:27] This bill addresses part of that lack. We favor the transfer of buildings to the city of Milwaukee for three reasons. Senator Darlene indicated these buildings

are owned by the city of Milwaukee. The title to these buildings are owned by the City of Milwaukee. Secondly, the mayor of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Common Council have been very friendly toward charter schools.

[00:37:53] In fact, the city of Milwaukee is a charter school authorizer. And number three and most important [00:38:00] m p s views, as someone mentioned today, independent charter schools as a competitive obs uh, obstacle, and they advance that obstacle through deeded restrictions, board policy and negotiating practices.

[00:38:16] Consider the following, if you will, of the 27 properties that M p s has declared surplus today. 13 school buildings remain empty, 13 school buildings. Secondly, according to the Department of City Development in the last several years, only one vacant M P SS school has been sold. And number three is Senator Darlene indicated one of the most accomplished public charter schools, not only in Milwaukee, but in the country.

[00:38:46] Milwaukee, uh, uh, uh, college Prep has spent three years negotiating with M P Ss for a building and negotiations continue [00:39:00] and they continue and they continue. Uh, the point is that. Milwaukee public school system views charter schools and a as a competitive obstacle. Now it is true, uh, that last, uh, month, uh, superintendent, uh, Thornton of m p s approached, uh, the mayor of Milwaukee and the President of the Common Council, Willie Hines, an offer to, uh, transfer nine school buildings to the city of Milwaukee, which could be used for high quality charter schools.

[00:39:38] Uh, well and good, uh, if indeed that was the only condition, uh, but it was not because in the letter that was sent to Alderman Hines and Mayor Barrett, the following sentence appears, under no circumstances will the city allow these properties to be used to the detriment of [00:40:00] students in enrolled in Milwaukee public schools.

[00:40:03] And what does m p s define as one of the most serious detriments competitive schools, competitive quality charter schools. So for all those reasons, Senate Bill 20 is an essential part of an effort to expand the number and quality of independent charter schools in the city of Milwaukee. And to address one of the most serious obstacles a charter school will face, namely the lack of public facilities.

[00:40:31] And when you have 13 empty buildings sitting in the city of Milwaukee and only one of those buildings in the last several years sold to a public school, uh, you understand the nature of the obstacle. And therefore, it is not only an issue of

badly, uh, protecting taxpayers' money, it is failing to develop the, uh, alternative system of quality charter schools, which are public charter schools that are available to the parents of Milwaukee.

[00:40:56] Happy to take any questions. Senator Olson. Is there any senator joke?

[00:41:00] Yeah. Thank you very much, Dennis. Um, uh, actually, we go back a long way. I remember back when you were in the legislature many years ago, indeed, Tony Earl and, uh, Jim Waner. And, uh, Jim Waner is now living up in Mercer. He is indeed. I wish I was living up in Mercer with him.

[00:41:16] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, I don't know if he'd agree that he wants you to be up there living with him, but, um, I, but I appreciate your, I actually prefer Door County, if you will. I appreciate your, your service, Dennis. I, I, I think you heard the earlier discussion in which there seems to be some agreement about the use of these facilities where there begins a departure, Dennis, is this notion that, um, these alternative schools provide an opportunity.

[00:41:45] Uh, to students for improving education without jeopardizing the remaining students who are in public schools. And I'm deeply concerned that there seems to be a lack of acknowledgement on the charter school advocate's position [00:42:00] that the students remaining in public schools are under significant budget restraint.

[00:42:05] They're told that they have to cut their spending by 5.5% in declining enrollment districts. It means that they're eliminating basic educational programs, and yet there is this rush to provide opportunity for some students who wish to have this individualized educational opportunity. So the collective good is at risk for the individual benefit.

[00:42:28] And I'd like you to comment about that because I know your philosophy. Many years ago as state legislator, you understood the notion that it takes a village to educate a child. Now it is everyone's out for themselves and those who don't have somebody advocating for them are at risk. So could you please comment on that aspect because you did spend some time in your testimony.

[00:42:50] Uh, Senator Jock, I have, uh, 45 years of experience with Milwaukee Public Schools as a student, as a parent whose children attended Milwaukee Public Schools [00:43:00] as a legislator who spent many, many years trying to advance quality legislation to advance the strength of Milwaukee Public Schools. As someone who has served as an administrator in Milwaukee public schools and

administered a program for 17 Central City schools, I know Milwaukee Public Schools.

[00:43:17] Mm-hmm. I'm not in a position, I don't care to be in a position to do anything to threaten the quality of good schools in, in the Milwaukee public school system. What concerns me And above all, when you speak of the collective good, what concerns parents and students in poor m p s schools that are not receiving the education that they should demand is to have an option available to them.

[00:43:41] Uh, the Milwaukee Charter School advocates and the charter schools we represent are only interested in providing educational options to parents who are unhappy with poor performing Milwaukee public schools. And we ought to be direct about that. Senator Jock Milwaukee public school system is one of the most challenged urban public [00:44:00] schools in the country.

[00:44:01] It's, uh, confronted with great challenges. Uh, the word crisis would be insufficient to describe its problems, uh, under those circumstances. I think the collective good in the city of Milwaukee is served by a quality system of public charter schools called charter schools that can satisfy the same requirements that D P I requires of a city of Milwaukee public school.

[00:44:26] I, if I can briefly, we're, we're sort of, we need to really get back on the, the bill, but I, I know this is a great, because I think we're moving into the next bill, tell you the truth. Well, I do too. That's why think we need to get, he went, he, he opened the door. And I've gotta go meet with some constituents from Northern Wisconsin.

[00:44:40] But Dennis, if I can you, you, I don't disagree with the goal of making sure that educational opportunity is available to every child. Happens to be our moral and constitutional responsibility as, as citizens of the state of Wisconsin. But under some of these provisions, a [00:45:00] student in a, the Maple School district will have less money available to it in order to provide an individual with a chance to have this one, to have a better education in Milwaukee.

[00:45:12] And that's where the diminishment takes place, is that you begin to see that we become less than equal throughout the state in order to help an individual, many more individuals suffer. I don't know if you want to comment on, on now, Dennis, or you're going to later. If you're gonna testify later, we'll have an opportunity.

[00:45:29] That's the challenge, Dennis. Yes, indeed. I hope to, uh, comment on that with my colleagues when we address Senate Bill 22. Thank you. Thank you. Okay. Any other questions? If not, thank you very much.

[00:45:42] It's the matter Will Gruber from Freedom Underwear. Freedom underwear, talking about the entire state underwear. Hi, I people, good morning. Good morning all. Thank you so much for hearing me. If you can hear me, I'm a little [00:46:00] hoarse. I wanna say I love this town. I'm a new citizen here. I thank you for giving me a moment to speak.

[00:46:07] I've gotta go to a doctor's appointment shortly, so I'll make it really brief. Yeah. Um, excuse me, chairperson and, uh, Joe. Senator Joe. Is it Joe? No. Joe. Um, amazing listening to you guys. You're on it. You don't, you don't sell out the kids the way that the things have been going around the country. I thank goodness that you guys are here in the first beginning stages of the fight.

[00:46:35] It's happening across the country. I haven't been able to keep an eye on the news. I've kind of been watching and learning as I've been sitting here. It's walking and making notes to the governor who's whatever. Um, sorry. I think it's very important. The education of the children and the public school system is what we have to do.

[00:46:57] The charter system seems to be ripping off [00:47:00] every penny that seems to come available to the public schools, which are being denied by the people who are trying to do it. Um, I haven't got a lot of stuff to say. I've got a lot more learning to do before I speak to you on a, on a big, a big time way or have any great information to spread.

[00:47:17] I do appreciate that you guys are on to what's going down and that the whole country is being thrown to the wolves and the wolves will lose. Our Lord is with us. And the new times are here. We win. We win. We win. Thank you. Thank you very much. Is there any questions? Sorry. No, that's fine. I opposing the bill.

[00:47:38] Yes.

[00:47:45] Heather Haviland from I f f Speaking in favor.

[00:47:53] Thank you Chair Olsson, members of the committee for allowing the opportunity to speak in support of [00:48:00] Senate Bill 20. And thank you Senator Darlene for introducing this important piece of legislation. My name is Heather

Heard. I'm the Director of Real Estate Services for I F F. We're a private not-for-profit organization, um, that provides real estate consulting services and financing to non-profits.

[00:48:20] We're based in Milwaukee in the state of Wisconsin, serving the whole state of Wisconsin. We also work in four other Midwestern states. We're a mission-driven organization and our mission is to help non-profits make execute and finance good decisions about their facilities. And the majority of our work in Milwaukee has been with schools.

[00:48:43] It, it schools comprise a large proportion of our portfolio and a mission. We're agnostic when it comes towards to schools, whether they're provided through a public system like the m Milwaukee public schools or a public charter school or a choice school. Our focus is on good [00:49:00] results and good outcomes for kids for the city of Milwaukee and the state of Wisconsin.

[00:49:06] I wanna talk to you a little bit today about two things in the short time I have available. I wanna share a little bit about my experiences. Um, I've worked kind of feet to the ground with about 13 schools over the past two years. Those include n p s charter schools, uh, non instrumentality or city and U W M charter schools and Choice schools.

[00:49:26] I've worked across the board, I've worked with N P Ss in helping them to execute their mission to grow and expand. They're all schools that are producing good results and that have a mission to grow and expand and meet more of the need in Milwaukee. So I wanna share with you some of the experiences that I've had just working on the ground, trying to find buildings, trying to finance buildings and trying to be a good steward of the resources they have available and to make sure that the majority of those resources are going to educate kids.

[00:49:55] Um, in terms of the need, which is another point I wanna touch on. This is a study [00:50:00] that we did last year looking at the need for performing schools in the city of Milwaukee. Um, if you're randomly choosing a school in Milwaukee of any nature, you have less than a 50 50 chance of selecting a school that is even approaching meeting state standards.

[00:50:18] Um, if we're going to work on approaching that problem and address that problem, we need to bring all resources to bear. And as Mr. Conta mentioned earlier, one of the major barriers to growth of good quality schools is the availability of

facilities. And that's a major focus of my work. Um, so in talking about this, I also wanna touch on a couple of the questions that you've addressed.

[00:50:45] Um, when I go look for buildings and try and help a school to find a facility, one of the first things that I do is just get in my car and drive around their target neighborhood and look and see. We know what's listed, but what's not listed and what might be a good [00:51:00] fit for them. And it's kind of, sometimes, it's often a process that's successful.

[00:51:07] Um, in Milwaukee in the last couple of years, I've done this number of times and I've had the same experience time and time again where I say, look, there's a great building. It looks like it's vacant, it's in the neighborhood. Wow. And then I turn the corner and I see, you know, the high standards start here, sign, and know that it's an M P Ss facility, that even though it's not used, it may not be available to the school, or most likely is not available to the school.

[00:51:30] And I have to strike it off my list even though it's in their target area, even though it's an empty building, even though it could be used to produce good quality results. And I wanna talk, and I wanna dwell on that for a minute and talk about the economics of that and address some of the questions have been around.

[00:51:46] Um, are we sacrificing collective for the individual? Are we making good economic decisions? The schools that I have, when we run up against that barrier, they have a mission to grow and expand and to serve kids. They're not stopping there [00:52:00] and saying, okay, I'm gonna give up. Instead they're taking 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, \$8 million that they could have invested and that could have gone back into the pockets of the city or Milwaukee Public schools when they purchased that building and fix it up.

[00:52:14] And they're taking funding that they could use in the classroom, and they're using it to, to develop a new facility. And we're purchasing warehouses and we're purchasing strip malls, and we're putting our money there instead of back into the schools. And we're paying twice. So as citizens of Wisconsin or residents of Wisconsin, what I see I'm doing is I'm paying twice because we paid to develop that building that's now sitting vacant, and now we're paying again for a public charter school using public funds to develop another facility somewhere else because that building's not available to them.

[00:52:44] Okay. Um, thank you. Um, just a question. You, you, so you do sell buildings, old schools. What kind of value do they have? I mean, do they get

discounted a lot because they're old [00:53:00] and they're sort of one use to a point? And I don't know, I don't know how to ask this to say how many cents on a dollar because I don't think that works.

[00:53:11] But value wise, what it, what, what are old buildings worth compared to. Any other building that are, you know, that's a school. Yeah, it varies considerably. And I'm pretty familiar with the m p s portfolio of facilities, um, depending on the location. Yeah. The reality is the highest and best use of most of these is as a school, and it's not as, uh, a retail commercial development.

[00:53:33] So that's going to drive the value of the building down. Um, it's really difficult to value those properties, but most of them are in disinvested neighborhoods. Most of them are, um, without many other uses. So I'd say it's not a, it's not a huge dollar amount, but there is, you know, there is a, um, a value to those schools in purchasing those buildings.

[00:53:54] And I think there is some potential funds to come from the sale to other schools. Okay. [00:54:00] Any other questions? If not, thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you. Yeah, you can.

[00:54:09] Okay. Next up we have Cheryl Brenner speaking on, I don't think so. Cheryl Brenner speaking against, and then the next four after that are Henry Tyson, Christine McDonough, Maureen Sullivan, and Chris Thiel. Morning. Good morning. Um, I'd like to first of all start by thanking you for listening. Um, one of my biggest concerns in all of this is, um, Senator Darling was saying that, um, this is clearly what people of Milwaukee want.

[00:54:44] Um, I guess I have a concern for that. Um, Ms. Darling represents very little of the district in Milwaukee, and I guess I'm a little concerned that we're not speaking necessarily for who we're representing. Um, I don't [00:55:00] see a strong push coming from Milwaukee in support of this. It might be coming from the suburbs, but I don't see it actually coming from the city.

[00:55:08] And that concerns me a bit. Um, another big concern I have with this bill is there is a structure in place that our school board who are elected officials currently have a process for dealing with this. Why is the state getting involved in local decisions? There already is a process. Why is the state telling us, no, the school board no longer has that authority.

[00:55:34] We're gonna take it and give it to the common council. So I am, I'm really concerned about the shift in the power and taking the power away from the people of Milwaukee. And that's gonna come up again with residency. I believe it came up yesterday with resident residency. Um, and also with vouchers. Let the local people, let the people they have elected govern them.

[00:55:57] Um, other concerns I have, uh, [00:56:00] once upon a time I had a car that I no longer needed 'cause I was fortunate enough to be able to walk to work. I did not sell my car because I figured in the near future I might need it again. It did cost me money to store it, it did cost me minimal maintenance on it, but in the long run it was cheaper for me to pull that car out of storage and use it again than it would have been to buy a new car.

[00:56:24] I'm concerned that with some of these buildings by giving the authority to a common council and not to the school board, we're not going to be looking long term at what is in the best interest of the kids or what the school district has prepared for in terms of buildings they might need. Um, also, I'm very concerned the way the bill is written, that this money is getting put into the general operating fund, and I believe this has been mentioned already and not into a fund that can support maintenance or other building as this budget hits and our class sizes go up larger and larger.[00:57:00]

[00:57:00] We don't physically have space in classrooms for 40 kids. Okay? You have kids sitting on the floor, you have kids sitting on a chair without a desk 'cause there's no room. So if M P Ss in a sense is going to be forced to get rid of these buildings, shouldn't they at least be allowed the opportunity to put their money back into their schools so they can make modifications and maintenance to the initial building?

[00:57:24] Sometimes you guys get that option. My other concern, um, by putting this into the general operating budget, okay, the line in the budget I'm reading, the purpose is to reduce taxes levied by the city. Um, it's my understanding that the amount of funding the school has available next year is based on to some extent, by the taxes levied the previous year.

[00:57:46] And if we're selling buildings and lowering taxes because of it and we don't have any more buildings to sell the next year, doesn't that mean the pot is suddenly smaller? It doesn't seem to make financial sense to me. Thank you.

[00:58:00] Thank you. Um, any que? Sure. Senator darling, then I, I just had a question.

[00:58:08] First of all I wanted, I wanted to know a little bit about your background. Are you a teacher? Um, I am a teacher, but I am also a parent. You're a parent, okay. To, yeah, students and a resident in the city. Okay. Well thanks, thanks for your comments. And I share your concerns and I had some of exactly the same questions, but to the last point about the effect of the way that the money is going and whether or not that's gonna have an effect on the resources available next year.

[00:58:35] I, I don't wanna put much counsel on the spot, but I wondered if, if she could respond to that or if, if we had to do more additional research to find out if your concern is, is something that needs to be considered. And I know there are amendments to the bill to do what it is that you're asking for, but that, that would be another piece of information that we'd need to be able to understand what, what the long-term effect is.

[00:58:59] So is [00:59:00] that, I don't know the answer right now, but I can check. Okay. Well, and thanks for bringing it up. 'cause it, it was an angle that nobody had talked about. And just one last comment. It's very difficult to separate this from the whole charter voucher school issue. It, it feels to many of us that live in Milwaukee, that live in the middle of this, that these are really intertwined and that by doing this, you're really pushing vouchers, you're really pushing charter schools and it's hard to keep those two items separate.

[00:59:28] Okay. Senator Darling? Yes. Thank you very much for coming today. It's, uh, good to have you here and voicing your opinion. Just two points of clarification. This wasn't my idea. This was, uh, a unanimous vote for the common council who in my last, um, knowledge represent the city of Milwaukee. And it's an issue.

[00:59:47] Why is it at the state level? It's because Mil, the city of Milwaukee is the only only city that has a relationship with the school district where they, they own the buildings and the [01:00:00] school district, you know, has control over them and runs them. And so that's why it's brought here. Not trying to take over local control, but because of the law where that relationship is different than any other school district and any other municipality in the state.

[01:00:14] That's why we're talking about it now. Thank you. But couldn't Milwaukee resolve that itself? Does that have to be something the state steps in and resolves? Well, they, I think the Mayor Hines and the Common Council passed a resolution saying this is what they wanted to do. Okay. So if I go back and look at common council minutes, I'll be able to verify.

[01:00:33] Absolutely. Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much. Any other questions? If not, sir. Okay.

[01:00:42] Henry Tyson? No, you're not, not Henry Tyson from the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program Schools. Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm actually gonna speak to you as the [01:01:00] superintendent of St. Marcus Lutheran School. St. Marcus is. Uh, a private school. In the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, we have 420 students.

[01:01:10] We're located on the north side of Milwaukee. Uh, we accept anyone. We serve special education students, uh, despite the fact that 89% of the students use vouchers and are low income African American students. We have a, uh, 95% high school graduation rate, uh, and do very well on the W K C E, the state standardized tests.

[01:01:33] I think our story, uh, is instructive as it pertains to this bill. Uh, in the year 2000, we had about a hundred students. We adopted, uh, the best practices in urban education, including the Milwaukee College Prep model. Uh, demand picked up in 2003. We spent five and a half million dollars to build a facility for 270 students.

[01:01:58] By 2008, that [01:02:00] facility was over capacity. It had 370 students in it, and in 2008, we turned away hundreds and hundreds of students who wanted to attend St. Marcus. In 2008, because of the demand, the board voted to double the size of the school to 600 students. We started a facility search, and we recognized that there were four vacant N P Ss buildings within 15 blocks of St.

[01:02:28] Marcus. We looked at two of them, Mick and Sarah Scott. 12 of us stood in the lobby of the Sarah Scott Middle School, and we were told we could purchase the building, but we could not operate it as a schooling competition. With m p s, having had access denied to the M p s facilities, we raised \$8 million.

[01:02:48] We started construction on a new building for 348 students. That building will open in August of this year. After this February enrollment period, which was [01:03:00] just 18 days long, we had waiting lists in every grade K five through eighth grade. We had 69 second grade students apply for 56 seats in 18 days.

[01:03:12] We were once again turn away hundreds of children over the course of this summer. Further expansion for St. Marcus is inevitable because parents are

desperate and they are demanding access to high quality education. This bill is critical, not just for St. Marcus, but for any school. And personally, I am an advocate for the rapid expansion of any public school, any charter school, and any voucher school that is providing the highest level of education.

[01:03:46] I don't care what kind of a school it is, we need to accelerate the growth of our few highest performing schools in every sector of our educational ecosystem because our students [01:04:00] cannot wait. Uh, in summary, Uh, it is, uh, in a city desperate for high quality educational options, all obstacles to the expansion of great schools must be removed.

[01:04:15] This bill removes a very significant obstacle to the expansion of high quality schools. Therefore, I support it. Thank you. Okay. Does, do you wanna speak? Uh, yeah, I, I think I'm next on the list. I'm not too sure. I was waiting to hear you say the names because I thought there was a woman in front of me.

[01:04:37] Okay. Let's, okay. You're not together. Okay. Okay. Questions? Nothing. Thank you very much for your testimony.

[01:04:48] Christine McDonough, you're not on Christine McDonough speaking against, yeah, I'm speaking against, um, I'm a taxpayer of the state of Wisconsin, and [01:05:00] I'm coming out to speak against this bill. And the reason that I'm speaking against this particular bill is I do think that it relates to the other bills for the privatization of our schools.

[01:05:08] Um, I have absolutely no faith in the Walker administration. I think they have proven that our corporatist and that they do not have the best interest of the citizens of this state or the children of this state in mind when they're doing anything. So I'm speaking against this basically because of my lack of faith in the people that are making decisions right now for the state of Wisconsin.

[01:05:30] That's really all I have to say. Okay. Any other questions? Any questions? Not, thank you very much, sir. I just wanted to make sure, you know that charter schools are public schools? Well, the, um, other bill, um, is it SSB 34? The bill that you're going to, uh, allow for, uh, teachers to teach without licensure? No, that's not in that bill.

[01:05:54] Okay. We'll talk about it later. Thank you. Yeah, we'll just do this one first. Can, can I ask one question too? If, if these [01:06:00] buildings are so needed, can't we rent them and make some money on them for these charter cities? I, I think that

is in the thing that they could be rented or sold. Mm-hmm. I don't think they have to be sold.

[01:06:09] From what I understand, they could be rented. Maybe that's an answer. Okay. Maureen. Oh, Chris, did you have a question? I'm sorry. She's, I'll have to No, it wasn't a question for her. It was a comment in regards to something that Senator Darling had said earlier about the support from the Common Council and the mayor.

[01:06:29] Um, but we'll, we need to hear from the testimony we can, we're gonna have plenty of time to talk about that. Sure. I just thing wanted to clarify that some of them have come out on this bill against it, um, that they'd come out in generality in favor of selling some of the buildings, but the specifics of this bill they have come out against.

[01:06:45] There will be somebody coming up and speaking. We just wanted to make sure that that's clear to the audience. Thanks. Maureen Sullivan from Woodland School. Speaking in favor is next. And then after that, Chris Thiel.

[01:07:00] Dr. Lawrence Hoffman and Justin Williamson. Morning. Good morning. I'm Maureen Sullivan. I'm principal and c e O of Woodland School, and I'm speaking in support of the Bill.

[01:07:16] Woodland School has been finding it very difficult to find suitable buildings for expansion or startup. A space previously. Previously used as a school is the best option for another school. It doesn't seem prudent or financially responsible to leave buildings empty and aging depreciating when there is a market for selling them.

[01:07:41] Woodland School is a U W M authorized to our independent charter school. We currently serve 310 students from 33 zip codes. Since becoming a charter school in 2004, enrollment has climbed from 229 [01:08:00] students to 310 students. Currently, Woodlands leases a building on Blue Mound Road across from the historic Calvary Cemetery and north of Miller Park.

[01:08:12] The building is filled to capacity, has no room for further expansion. For the last three years, 99% siblings have filled our four K program. The waiting list over the last three years has been filled by approximately 60 students and families. Classes are full for the fall 2011, so the waiting list grows.

[01:08:38] Currently it is at 58. Our retention of students and families has been 91% or greater. Average daily attendance over the seven years as a charter school has been 96%. We believe that we have enough interest and a strong enough model to start another successful school. [01:09:00] Woodland School has leased its current facility since July, 2003.

[01:09:05] In February, 2003 when we needed to relocate from fifth and Mitchell from an archdiocese and owned building. The only school building available to us in the city of Milwaukee was our current facility owned at that time by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Since 2003, Woodlands has continued to look at available buildings for sale in the city of Milwaukee with the hope of owning its own facility, we have looked at warehouses, one parochial, dilapidated building, and empty daycare facilities.

[01:09:40] None of these were worth pursuing. We can't grow our successful school without access to a second appropriate building another school building is the most logical choice, and owning a building will build financial equity for us. Thank you. Thank you. Any questions? [01:10:00] If not, thank you very much for your testimony.

[01:10:04] Sarah, Chris Thiel from Milwaukee Public School, speaking against,

[01:10:18] uh, chair Olson, members of the committee. Thank you very much, uh, for the opportunity to speak today. And I wanted to, um, follow up quick. I do want to thank, first of all Dean Dale, uh, for doing the wonderful job that he did, in fact, with Milwaukee Public Schools, because our facilities are in good shape. Uh, thank to, uh, representative Dale's brother, uh, and also want to thank members of the committee for their openness in discussing how we resolve, uh, some of these issues if they go forward.

[01:10:43] And just to follow up on that at the beginning, we do, as Senator Larsson, uh, mentioned, it's our, I mean, we think it's a common sense idea that if in fact the, the, the total authority of these buildings, in essence, if the city gets the keys to these facilities, that they then pick up the maintenance [01:11:00] costs.

[01:11:00] Um, and we just think that, you know, that's how it works in real life. And if that's how we move forward, that, that makes a lot of sense. Um, we also would like to have a conversation thank to Senator Darling, uh, to talk about what the definition, definition of underutilized means, and perhaps it's not a, a percentage, but perhaps a process.

[01:11:17] And, and again, thank you for that. Um, and in terms of how we might use the, um, the proceeds from any sales, we would hope, uh, and we think that you, you kind of get a double win out of this. We would hope that, um, any proceeds could be applied to our debt that we currently carry related to facilities. Uh, we have, we have a good amount of debt in that area.

[01:11:40] We think it makes sense to pay that down as we can target those resources to, uh, the classroom as much as possible. Um, and then that also has beneficial, uh, impact for the taxpayer in terms of aid that we might receive from the state, uh, moving forward. So hopefully, you know, we could consider that as well.

[01:11:57] I just wanna give you a bit of background in [01:12:00] terms of how, you know, we've kind of come to this moment. Obviously I think early on, uh, Mr. Rnold spoke about declining enrollment of the district. We are in a process, and we went through it again last night where we are consolidating schools and closing facilities.

[01:12:13] Uh, and as Mr. Kto mentioned, we do have 27 that we've listed as surplus and 13 that are currently empty. And the process, and, and frankly we've worked very closely with the city, uh, in trying to sell those buildings. We have had some. Limited in a, in a fairly tough environment, but, uh, good success. One of our best examples is, uh, Jackie Robinson Middle School, which we converted into a, um, uh, it was a 4.5 acre site.

[01:12:40] We put 64 units of senior housing there. Um, it's going back on the tax rolls, and we think that makes sense for taxpayers. Makes sense for us, certainly. Um, because we agree, I think we're all in agreement about the fact that we would, uh, uh, like to spend our money elsewhere and we do carry a million dollar cost, [01:13:00] um, to maintain these buildings and they are in good shape.

[01:13:03] But what we're running up against here, and the word competition has been used and people have talked about the expansion of different types of school programs. And the unfortunate reality as some of the language has been quoted to you, uh, about direct competition with m p s schools alludes to the fact that the funding systems for both the, the voucher program that was spoken of and the two r charter system specifically, um, that the way that the funding is provided for those schools takes money away from n p s children.

[01:13:35] Right now, \$50 million is taken away from N P S students to support the voucher program, and roughly \$8 million is taken away from N P S students to support the, to our charter program. Um, and obviously we've been discussed this

issue in terms of the voucher program, but what we are then left to do in, in terms of the charter schools, all all districts do this.

[01:13:56] Um, we are then left with a choice of either [01:14:00] allowing the defunding of our own students to happen or to raise the revenue locally to fill in that hole. And we've been filling in that hole as much as possible. So on the surface level, I think we agree that there's a million dollar cost and obviously that the taxpayer issue there.

[01:14:16] We, I think we all agree on that, but if you dig another layer deeper, what we really see here is that in terms of protecting N P S S students and being conscientious about our taxpayers, if we get into a mode with this bill where these facilities are simply being turned over to voucher schools, which, uh, as the testimony alluded to, um, are likely to be expanding, uh, and as well as charter schools, you're defunding N P S S students simply based on the way that the state has set up the funding for these programs.

[01:14:50] That's our main concern. We're in a bind here. You take students away, I mean, take funding away from N P S students and then, and then put the, put the, uh, the onus on [01:15:00] the taxpayer, uh, to come up with those revenues. If we had a different system, certainly if the students were counted in the equalization aid formula, if there were some other way of funding these programs, we'd perhaps be having a different conversation.

[01:15:12] I'd also like to say, and I, I, the, the, the woman from I F F was in a meeting with us that we're trying to repopulate some of these buildings, it's plain to see, uh, work as schools and, and how much, whether you could put a restaurant in them or not, I don't know. But um, It. We are trying to repopulate many of these schools, uh, or working toward that end, uh, with charter schools that come under the m p s chartering authority because in that way, the fund, there's no harm done to m p s students and funding comes through the district in a way that we think, uh, makes sense for taxpayers.

[01:15:48] So we've been looking into that option. We've been expanding that option. We've done that at a number of, uh, a number of facilities. Um, and that's part of the conversation. I'm, I'm not in all the direct negotiations, but that's part of the [01:16:00] conversation that I believe we have when we're approached. And certainly recently we've had it when we're approached about a charter school using one of our facilities because we think, one, it doesn't harm N P s students, and two, it protects our property taxpayers.

[01:16:12] So thank you again for being open to, uh, some further discussion. And we, uh, obviously are not in support of the passage of this bill. Thank you very much. One of the points you brought up is one of the, when I first saw this, I thought, yeah, we need to make sure that, uh, if City of Milwaukee gets the buildings, they need a little incentive to do something with 'em.

[01:16:32] So they need to be on the, on the dime for maintenance. 'cause otherwise, you're, you still have to pay. So I, I think that's probably a good idea. Senator Feal, I just wanna clarify your numbers. You talked about, um, the cost that to our charter schools and the voucher program has, in taking away money from N P S and I got the 8 million to support to our charter schools.

[01:16:56] What was the cost of the voucher program? The voucher program? And if I [01:17:00] could expand on that, the voucher program right now is \$50.2 million. If you put those two figures together of, of the total levy that the M P Ss board levies, 20% of that levy goes to schools that we have no association with or control over.

[01:17:19] So we're in an odd situation here because of the state funding formula that if, if voucher schools are gonna expand. And we think it's logical to think that in the near future, the D P I, according to the D P I, there are about 29,000 private school students in the city of Milwaukee. So if you jump roughly in, I usually conserve estimate of 27,000.

[01:17:38] So if you jump from where we are now with the vouchers, which is an enrollment of 20,300, and you go to 27,000 in the, near the near future here mm-hmm. As things cycle forward, that's, that's for us a \$16 million tax increase on our property taxpayers or reduction of revenue to our students or some combination of the both. [01:18:00]

[01:18:00] And, and, and given where we are with what the state is proposing, or the, sorry, the governor's proposed in terms of his budget, this, this, as we see it, if, if we facilitate a process without a fix to how these systems are funded, where we expand these programs by taking money off the backs of our students essentially.

[01:18:20] And then, I mean, the analogy we use is that essentially these two funding systems, they hold n P S students hostage. They ask local taxpayers to pay the ransom, and if they don't, the kids get hurt because our schools get defunded. Um, and I've heard a lot about expansion here, both for, to our charters and for voucher schools.

[01:18:38] Um, and I haven't heard a whole lot about fixing what we know is problematic for us, specifically in vouchers. And I think for all districts, uh, in, in terms of how to, our charters are funded and that when people talk about competition and, and, you know, is m p s acting in a rational manner? I would say yes, we're acting in a very business-like fashion.

[01:18:58] I don't think the common counselor or [01:19:00] the mayor, if they were already giving \$8 million away to some other entity, would facilitate a process where that would continue to happen. So we'd ask for your help overall on those things, but that specifically is why we have such a problem, um, uh, at the moment, uh, and what our concerns revolve around here.

[01:19:18] Have you had a chance to do the math on the preliminary numbers that have come out so far going into this next budget year For us in terms of, for, for its total effect? Yeah. That we're saying it's net effect. Uh, some, some information is still coming in. You know, when we look at the legislative fiscal bureau, I think in the first year, once we get some understanding, even though the special education pot is level funded, we're gonna see a, a reimbursement diminishment on, on a percentage basis.

[01:19:46] Um, we, our finance department a couple weeks back, put out a number of about 74 million, uh, and I would anticipate a loss of 74 million, a lot direct loss of 74 million. And I think as we look at that a little more deeply, it could get up toward, [01:20:00] um, 90, um, in the first year. And that's only the first year.

[01:20:04] And certainly the second year, um, has a huge impact as well as you look at the legislative fiscal bureau member and see, uh, how this plays out moving forward. Thank you very much. Thank you, Senator Darling. Um, thank you very much for coming and above what we're talking about now. We really think this education committee can be a great partner for you and M P Ss and for the children and families in Milwaukee to work together to help raise, um, graduation rates and performance.

[01:20:34] And I know you have a big job and we, we look forward to, to working with you. We're very excited about your new superintendent, and I think that he has been in favor of charter schools, but in the, in the, in the interim, if you could tell me, it's my understanding that N p s gets between 10 and \$11,000 per pupil all told state aid and property tax.

[01:20:55] Some, uh, correct. Yeah. And that from the state, your [01:21:00] contribution from the state is around 60% of your allocation, and then you get federal dollars in property taxes. And so we have a huge investment in M p s and, and we wanna work with you so, so we all can succeed. So just please know that. From the bottom of all of our hearts, because as Milwaukee goes, so does the rest of our state because we have to have students who can succeed and have opportunity in this, this life.

[01:21:28] So thank you. But I, I do look forward to working with you on this bill because basically it's about providing opportunity for children. I don't, and we'll, we'll look forward to talking to you about your agenda as well. Thank you, sir. Thank you. Okay. Thank you very much. Appreciate your testimony. Um, Sarah, Dr.

[01:21:47] Lawrence Hoffman, and I'll just read the next four names. Justin Williamson, Lorraine Jacobs, Dan Ross, Miller and Perry. I can't quite read. It looks like Buck [01:22:00] maybe. Good morning. Good morning. Thank you.

[01:22:08] I wanna make some brief points, please.

[01:22:13] My first point, this is Senate bill 20 that we're talking about, but it's part of a package that includes Senate Bill 22 and they work as a whole. Earlier Mr. Conta said that the empty buildings in M P S should be sold or leased to charter schools. He defined charter schools as public schools. However, SB 22 would change the definition of charter schools.

[01:22:45] Maybe they'd still be public schools, but a nine person board appointed by Governor Walker, Senator Fitzgerald and Assemblyman Fitzgerald would approve the charter schools. So the political [01:23:00] pals of the party in Power Republicans today, maybe Democrats tomorrow, would have a relatively easy time. Not only getting schools started, but getting school buildings from m P s.

[01:23:17] Second point is more of a question. Is there ever a time when an empty school building should not be sold or leased to another school or to a developer? What are the criteria by which schools may or may not should or should not be given over to, uh, other users? And thirdly, kind of an overarching argument.

[01:23:46] Teachers don't get significantly better benefits today than when I started teaching 40 years ago. The guilty parties in this time of financial trouble [01:24:00] are not the teachers or the school district. They are the healthcare industry, the health insurance industry, and the pharmaceutical companies. Thank you.

[01:24:11] Thank you for your testimony. Is there any questions? Not. Thank you Justin Williamson. Speaking against,

[01:24:25] thank you. Um, I don't have anything prepared. I am a father of an M p Ss child, uh, and a future m p s child. I am a product of M p s. I actually attended Daniel Webster Middle School, one of the closed schools. Uh, I'm not sure what they're doing with it now, but, um, I am definitely against this bill. I am against all of 'em in a package.

[01:24:51] Uh, they are definitely package. I do not believe in making our schools a corporation or business. [01:25:00] I went to alternative schools as well. Um, I have a good understanding of the charter program, and those schools might do well on paper, but they don't prepare you afterwards. And I think that if we expand this and, and make it larger, I'm skeptical as what, what the schools might do as far as if you turn 'em into a business, then they're gonna be forced to produce, and then what happens when they don't produce?

[01:25:28] Then you close these schools as well, and we'll be in the same situation. Um, I'm, I'm really scared of making this a big business. Uh, that's how I see it. That that's it. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Any questions? If not, thank you for coming. Oh, did you have one? No. Oh, thank you.

[01:25:52] Lorraine Jacobs from the Citizens of Milwaukee. Speaking against,
[01:26:00]

[01:26:02] I put that down because I just, that, just as citizen of Milwaukee, I've grown up in Milwaukee and attended the Milwaukee Public Schools. There's a couple things that, um, concern me about this particular bill. Um, I feel that it, it does drain resources from the city and the m p s budgets and other people ahead of me have given you numbers and explained how that can happen.

[01:26:29] Um, I also feel that it, um, I wondered if there was going to be public input into any of the decisions made regarding the sale of any of the buildings. Um, but one of the things that really, um, saddens me, well, two things. One is that this bill is part of many, but it's one bill in which, um, there is an implied.

[01:26:57] Lack of belief and success of the [01:27:00] Milwaukee Public Schools, um, that there would be no need for these buildings in the future. And that there is no sense in putting effort into building the Milwaukee public school system itself. And

also that there is this implied expectation that the, um, um, charter schools and other private entities for education will be the alternative.

[01:27:27] Uh, and you know, I, I'm just a citizen. I, I don't study these things, but it seems to me that we should be do, doing more to working together and bringing all of the wisdom and expertise and obviously these very hardworking people who are, who are running wonderful charter schools. They should all be brought together with the people in M P Ss so that we can work together and building a school system that's good for all the children in the city of Milwaukee.

[01:27:56] Thank you very much. Thank you for coming over and testifying. Any [01:28:00] questions? Thank you.

[01:28:04] Dan Ross Miller from the Wisconsin Association of School Boards
Speaking against

[01:28:12] I.

[01:28:16] Marker.

[01:28:20] Morning. Good morning. I'm Dan Ross Miller. I'm the Director of Government Relations for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards. Uh, I would like to, to change, this is gonna be a long hearing. You're gonna hear lots of testimony. I'd like to change my registration to, um, appear not appearing, but not speaking.

[01:28:37] Um, I, uh, I do want to just say one thing. I'm not an expert. You seem to be speaking. Yeah, it sounds like speaking there. Having said that, I'm gonna, I'm gonna turn around. Um, we won't listen. How's that sound? Fair enough. Fair enough. Uh, I'm not an expert on the home rule provisions of the state constitution or the way, uh, Milwaukee is set up.

[01:28:59] I, [01:29:00] I, Milwaukee Public Schools has its own chapter of the statutes Chapter one 19. I generally try and avoid looking at that as much as I can because it only applies to m p s, but I am old enough to remember that once upon a time in the state, we had city school districts and there were about, um, well there were quite a few of them.

[01:29:19] Madison was one, Stevens Point was another. And there you had to go to a board of control to get your levy approved. Uh, it was a very cumbersome system. It

seems to me that Milwaukee is a very cumbersome system and, uh, governor Dreyfuss was very courageous in signing the bill that did away with those city school districts and, and freed up, um, schools to have school boards to have more control over their, um, their budgets and their facilities.

[01:29:48] And I think that might be a model that should be looked at in this context as well. Thank you. Thanks. So you didn't speak, we won't ask you questions. I'm happy to [01:30:00] answer any you have. Thanks Dan. Terry Perry Buck? Yes. Um, speaking against, and then after that we have Katie Reader and Jamar Meeks. Good morning.

[01:30:18] Good morning. I'm Perry Buck. I'm a citizen of taxpayer, not a public employee, although I'm related to one. I do live in the city of Milwaukee. I own a home in the city of Milwaukee. I'm very concerned about what the combined effect of these measures is going to do to my home property values. Although I realize we're speaking only initially to Senate Bill 20.

[01:30:36] I've given you my written testimony as to all three bills in a one page summary, and so I think that'll pretty much take care of me today. Primarily the reason why I wanted to appear, what concerns me is that the fact that it appears Senate Bill 20 is gonna offer the property below market value. I bought my home in Milwaukee seven years ago.

[01:30:51] It's probably lost 25% of its value since then. I just refinanced. I'm not interested in anything that's gonna decrease property values, uh, in any shape or [01:31:00] form in the city of Milwaukee. I think the Milwaukee public schools face a, uh, pretty good challenge. My daughter is in, uh, Ronald Reagan High School, where there's sometimes 40 kids in the class.

[01:31:10] But I think the teachers and faculty are doing a pretty good job of keeping the school together. What I've been told in connection with these bills is that my property tax values may increase substantially as a right as a result of the funding that's provided to the support, the, uh, charter and voucher schools.

[01:31:26] I am strongly concerned about that and would be strongly opposed to the measures because of that. Uh, I know you'll hear from hundreds of people today. My testimony's pretty short, but it is a testimony of one taxpayer, one property owner in the city of Milwaukee. And maybe it's only, uh, you know, my equity, which is pretty small in the terms of the billions of dollars in state budget.

[01:31:45] But I was concerned enough about it to come down today and appear before you. Thank you for coming. Is there any questions? Not, we appreciate you coming and we've got your, uh, written testimony. I've seen it there. Thank you [01:32:00]

[01:32:01] Katie Reader speaking against,

[01:32:09] from Cross Plains. She's not here. We'll, uh, make that, uh, registering against them. Oh, nope, she's not here. That's okay. Jamar Meeks from or speaking in favor?

[01:32:28] Nope. I guess they're overflow.

[01:32:35] Yeah, we, we called 'em a little while ago, so hopefully they heard it. Um, Katie Reader or Jamar Meeks, if you're in the overflow room, we're ready.

[01:32:48] And that's it after that. Yeah, those are the last two we have. So, uh, We will wait just a minute and if they're not here, then we'll conclude the hearing on this bill and go to Senate [01:33:00] Bill 34.

[01:33:19] Okay. Who you ready? It looks like they're not here. Okay. 34. Ready? We just make them non speakers. Okay. Um, here. 34 Alberta?

[01:33:37] I think so. I mean, is that how we usually do it? Yeah.

[01:33:48] Okay. It looks like they're not here. So that will conclude the testimony on Senate Bill 20. We will go to Senate Bill 34. Senator Darling. [01:34:00]

[01:34:07] Okay. One person.

[01:34:13] Oh, is is that Jamar? Are, are you Jamar? Okay. Alberta Jamar's here.

[01:34:25] You just made it my friend. I have to wait 'cause they was doing an interview on house. That's okay. 'cause I'm here to talk about the, the bill, about the teachers, um, being able to live outside the city. No, we're talking about Senate Bill 20, the one dealing with selling excess property. Oh, okay. Okay. Well I think that should be in the city's hands because obviously N p S hasn't been doing a good job of, um, selling the buildings or doing anything with them.

[01:34:53] Um, I also went to Daniel Webster and I don't even know what's going on with that school. I'm seeing a lot of schools, a lot of [01:35:00] buildings in the area of Milwaukee just being up, being, um, active and running and I'm not seeing anything being done with 'em. So, um, I'm against it, uh, against, down forward. I'm sorry.

[01:35:12] Okay. Thank you very much.

[01:35:19] Is there any questions for Jamar? If not, thank you very much for coming and testimony. Clarifying and getting in here on time or getting in here. Okay. I could use this. Turn that off. Okay. Good morning. You can start again. Thank you Mr. Chairman. I, I think you and I could have had a conversation. Nobody else has left, but thank you very much, uh, Mr.

[01:35:45] Chairman for having, um, A public hearing on SB 34, the Milwaukee Teacher's Residency bill. And, uh, this bill has been up before, and it represents the right of teachers to choose that where they can live and not [01:36:00] be, um, mandated to have to live within the district. I'm not saying they should live outside the district, it just gives the teacher the freedom to choose where, where they want to live.

[01:36:10] And this bill has been debated, um, a lot, lot a long time. And teachers say, you know, well as a teacher, I, I should not have my right to live where I want to taken away from me because I'm a teacher. The only two large urban school districts have such restrictions, uh, Chicago, and I know Chicago's looking at removing their residency requirement as well, and Milwaukee.

[01:36:37] So all the other, all the other large cities in the United States do not have residency requirements for their teachers. And it's great if the teachers decide to live within the area they teach. I was a teacher and, and I used to find it really, really helpful to live in the area where my students were and the parents.

[01:36:56] And that's great if, if that's where you, you can choose to live. [01:37:00] But I've been told there are many teachers who have husbands or wives in other professions and they need to live in different places for different reasons. And I think it should be a right to choose where you live. And that's what this bill is all about.

[01:37:15] Simply that, that we should remove the ban and the requirement that teachers in the city of Milwaukee have to live within the city limits. It's a very simple

bill, and I just wanna tell you, um, and I, one of the city's large cities that had had the restriction and took it off, and what happened to them is people will say, oh, you know, um, we won't be able to attract good teachers if we don't require them to live in Milwaukee.

[01:37:40] Well, this is just the opposite. We want to attract the best and brightest teachers that we can, and we feel that they, the teachers should be able to live where they want. And it's interesting in the, the, uh, Chicago district, and I was watching what, uh, now Secretary Duncan has been doing, he's doing a lot [01:38:00] of, and recommends doing a lot of what we're recommending today, number one, to give teachers the freedom to live where they want to live.

[01:38:07] And he's also promoting charter schools, which are public schools, to give options. So I think we have to look at the major, major initiatives around the country and say, are we in tuned or not? With what, just what's going around the country? And if we look at other major cities, only one Chicago requires that their teachers have to live in the city.

[01:38:27] And they are looking at removing that restriction too. So from a teacher's point of view, it's, it's a. It's a right issue to have the ability to choose where they want to, to live From the school district's, um, point of view, it's, it's important to, to get the largest, best qualified pool that they can to choose from because the Milwaukee Public Schools is one of the most challenging school districts in our, our state.

[01:38:52] And it's very important that the district be able to choose the teachers that can add the most value to their [01:39:00] district. And there are teachers, obviously, most of the teachers there who do con, contribute enormous value, but I don't think that we have to limit their ability to live where they want as a requirement for teaching in the city of Milwaukee.

[01:39:12] So basically that's it. And in Philadelphia, in 2001, their residency rule was abolished by the state legislature and a 2006 report, the Philadelphia school district had significantly decreased the number of teacher vacancies. So it helped them in terms of their teacher vacancies to open up to not having to live in the city or to choose to live in the city.

[01:39:36] And only 65 teacher vacancies in a district with over 10,000 teachers. So in Philadelphia, they found that really helped them address the vacancy issue. And right now, um, we need to get our, the best and brightest teachers that we can. And

the attrition rate of teachers improved too, with fewer restrictions from the, the first year teachers who [01:40:00] came into the district and then for other reasons, had reasons to live in other places.

[01:40:05] It reduced the, uh, attrition rate for those first year teachers. And the Philadelphia School District announced in 2003 that applications for prospective teachers rose 44% from 2002 to four, um, because of the elimination of having to live in the city, their pool increased, which is to the benefit of the district.

[01:40:28] So for all those reasons, I don't think we're in line with what other, uh, cities are doing. In fact, it's only Chicago, and they're looking at removing that, that restriction. So I think it's time for us to, as a state to say this, this restriction is not in our best interest. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Is there any questions?

[01:40:46] Uh, Senator Larsson. Thank you. Um, I'm interested if you think that the people of Wisconsin feel restricted in the res in our state restriction that, uh, public employees need to be residents of the state. [01:41:00] I don't think that's the topic of the day right now.

[01:41:08] Well, I mean, if it's, if we're furthering the, the thought process that you think that the people of Milwaukee are restricted to living in the city of Milwaukee, and that's a restriction, then, do you think that the people of the state of Wisconsin are restricted because they're forced to live in the state of Wisconsin?

[01:41:25] That to me is irrelevant. Why are they forced to live in the state of Wisconsin? So that, so you think they're not, I think you're missing the point. The, the, well, Milwaukee is the only city in the state that has a residency requirement that anybody, any teacher has to live in. The, the, the area, the districts the only city that has that requirement.

[01:41:49] Right. But we have a, I mean, we have a state requirement. I mean, we, this is something that the city has. I'm, if we're, I'm sorry, but no. Can we talk about this? I, I'm not seeing the [01:42:00] connection. Can someone explain the connection? Maybe you can. Senator Olson? Well, it, it talks about, it talks about residency, but I think we're really just talking about m p s today and let's just talk about the bill and 34.

[01:42:13] Right. Well, and I understand where you're, where you're going, but you know, we got a lot of people to talk to and you can talk to her at another time. Yeah, yeah. I'd be glad to talk to, you know, we're, we're all colleagues here, so we have an

opportunity to talk tomorrow. Next day. These folks only have a chance to come here today and talk.

[01:42:29] Right. Well, I know that this is something what happens in public hearings is people can present these, these, these issues, and this is one that I've heard quite a bit from my constituents, that if we're gonna go in as a state and target a specific city and change the restrictions that exist in that city, a city that I live in, that you do not live in, that I represent, half of my, half of my district is represented there.

[01:42:53] The, the folks that I know and talk to appreciate that we have teachers that live on our block, that live in our neighborhoods [01:43:00] and are committed to our neighborhoods. That's great. And then we have the state coming in to say, well, well, those are, those are nice rules. Even though that the school board doesn't, doesn't want these things, the state is gonna come in and say, we're gonna have a new standard for you.

[01:43:13] But at the same time, the state has a standard that's similar, where the state employees have to be citizens, have to be residents of the state of Wisconsin. It seems kind of double-sided. It seems like it's, I just like to interject, if I may, we have a lot of people who wanna talk. The, the state issued, well, well, I'm sorry.

[01:43:38] No, no. The the question is, he's made a statement, I don't know if you want to answer or not. If you don't have an answer that just say, I don't have an answer right now. And so, but to be, to work in the state of Wisconsin, you have to be a state, you have to be a resident of the state. Is that what you're saying?

[01:43:53] I'm saying that there's a standard, there's you're making a double standard. We're making it duplicitous. But what I, can I just [01:44:00] explain what I am, I am saying Go ahead. We are, there are no other city in the state of Wisconsin has the requirement that you have to live in the district in which you teach.

[01:44:08] We're the only city, and we're only of two in the whole country. So all I'm saying is it's great if the teachers live in, in the district. This is the, for the teacher to be able to choose where they live and not have the state of Wisconsin say, you must live in the district. That's what, why we are here at the state talking about what's on the books.

[01:44:29] And I'm suggesting a change that teachers should be free to live where they want to within they, they obviously are some of the teachers. I don't know any

other city. Do you know any other city that has a requirement that you have to live in the city in order to teach? No, but I do, you know, of any other major city other than Chicago that has that requirement?

[01:44:52] But I see the purpose of why we have that. I see the purpose of making sure that our teachers the same. And this is something that was discussed yesterday with the, with a different [01:45:00] topic for fire and police of making sure that these people are committed to the city. These are public servants. This is public money coming from the public coffers that are raised within those city boundaries.

[01:45:09] And so they make a city rule that says that if you would like to serve the citizens of our community, you should also be a citizen of our community. Similarly, I have a restriction on where I can live and that if I wanna serve the seventh Senate district, I must live within the seventh Senate district.

[01:45:26] I don't view it as a restriction. I view it as being I am better serving my community because I live within that community. Well certainly because we all have that. And it was good that you did, you came back from Illinois, thank you. Right? Well, while I was serving my citizens from, from Illinois, because you were attacking them.

[01:45:43] But if you wanna talk about that, I'd be happy to. We don't wanna un Yeah, let's ongoing dialogue. We need to ask questions. And Senator joke, do you have one? Yeah, I do. I'm sorry I missed your testimony, but I've got a summary of it. Um, and I have mixed feelings about this bill. I don't wanna be going two for two on bills that you [01:46:00] and I are talking about here.

[01:46:02] I may send the wrong impression, uh, that, but here, here's my mixed, my mixed feeling. Yeah, go ahead. Uh, number one, I, I understand that when a teacher comes to school, they should be held accountable for the work that they do in school and that we shouldn't really be in control of their life after school.

[01:46:21] Um, it, it, it, so I, I understand the need for independence, but here's the other part of this that is I'd like you to address. If you take this bill along with charter schools, along with choice, along with other measures that begin to fracture this village that's supposed to be behind every child, what do, what kind of a community do you end up with that's supporting the children that remain there?

[01:46:50] Well, obviously we need strong communities, strong parents. The biggest indicator of success for schools would be these factors. Number one would be.

[01:47:00] Parents who are involved with their kids' education, that's number one. And that the community is involved with the child's education. I totally agree with that.

[01:47:09] And these efforts are not trying to diminish public education, but to strengthen it. And we can have that debate. Obviously you disagree with that, but I wanna tell you that this particular bill is about residency for teachers in the city of Milwaukee. Now, your wife, is she still teaching? Uh, and she, she, uh, she's retired but she substitute teaches and volunteers every Monday.

[01:47:35] Uh, I I don't know if you quite heard the first part of my remark. Go ahead. I said I am of mixed feelings 'cause I'm not mixed emotions. 'cause I'm not sure we ought to be telling a teacher where they should live. No, they don't. We should be held holding them accountable for how they teach. Sure. So, but it's that next part of the question that has to be addressed.

[01:47:55] If you begin to fracture this community, what do you have left for those [01:48:00] children whose parents don't have, whose children don't have choices? That's the question you must answer, Senator Darlene. In the range of all of these issues in the broad scheme, we have to ensure that all of our children get the best education possible.

[01:48:15] And that I mentioned before, the best indicator of success is when parents are really involved with the education of their children and give them the support to do their best. And the community supports the parent and the child in that education. And I think that this is something that we as a state have to really look at.

[01:48:34] If what I do is I look at all, all different school districts and based on demand in Milwaukee, where are the parents signing up to go to school and where aren't they? And I look at the list of where are the school succeeding and say God bless 'em, how can we help 'em do more? And where are the kids not succeeding?

[01:48:57] And we have those lists that are available from the D [01:49:00] P I as you know. So I think we as a a committee have to dig in and do our best to do everything we can possible to make sure we strengthen our education system because that is the key to our future. One, one final question and it really ties into 22 as well.

[01:49:17] Sure. Who's gonna care for the children where their parents aren't doing their jobs? And I think that's a key question. I think that we have to look at those particular school districts where there are a lot of homeless children where there

isn't security in their homes. Look at parents who are struggling and we know where a lot of them are and give them the support they need and give the teachers the support they need to deal with the challenges of, of families who are struggling.

[01:49:47] I agree with you and I think that's a real role for this education committee and I look forward to working with you on that. Thank you. Thank you. Okay. Any other questions? If not, thank you very much. Thank you. The next person to [01:50:00] testify seeing Sarah is gone for a minute, is, uh, Jim, uh, Winkle speaking against, and then following that will be Terry speaking in favor and following that will be representative Christine Snicky.

[01:50:18] And then, um, Christine mc, uh, doll, or, yeah. Okay. Morning and welcome. Thank you. I am Jim Winkle. Um, I don't have any prepared, prepared testimony for this, so I'll, I'll be, I'll be brief. Um, Senator Larsson, I think, asks some really, really good questions, uh, that, that I think a lot of people would like to hear an answer to.

[01:50:40] Um, I myself, uh, work for the university, so I'm required to live in Wisconsin. I'm also required to have a bachelor's degree to work there. Certain jobs have certain requirements and, um, I believe that it's really important for actually, uh, Senator Darling. I think that you said community is like the second most important thing in education.

[01:50:58] Well, community [01:51:00] means teachers living in the community. I, I have a, I have a daughter who's a junior in high school, and I see her teachers in my neighborhood all the time. They care about her. They ask about her. It's community. Community is physical community, not some virtual community where you have people coming in from far away.

[01:51:14] Um, Milwaukee's a big city and uh, the other concern I have is that with a big city, you have people driving further, which causes pollution. Uh, asthma rates in Milwaukee are already high. This is just gonna make it, uh, somewhat worse. That's really all I have to say. Thank you. Thank you. Just, just a question.

[01:51:30] I mean, you teach at the university? I don't teach. I'm a, I'm a staff member. Oh, staff. But you don't have to live in the city of Madison, do you? In Wisconsin. I have to live in Wisconsin. Well, right. I mean, I think we're, but that was, well, I understand that, but you don't have to work or live in Madison. You can live in Wisconsin.

[01:51:46] I think sort of the same thing. She's talking about teachers who teach at M P Ss, you know, they don't even have to live in Wisconsin outta this bill, but I assume they probably would. Well, that's an assumption. You know, you know what, what assume [01:52:00] means. Right, exactly. Yeah. I know what it means. And actually, I, I can, I, can I use that myself?

[01:52:05] I can add that. Um, you know, I live a mile and a half from work and I walk to work, and so I think it's good to get people. And in fact, in cities in Madison, there are, uh, like some of the hospitals are looking at encouraging workforce housing near the place of employment. I think we need more of that.

[01:52:19] This is going in the wrong direction. Okay. Thank you very much, Sarah. Terry wanes speaking in favor.

[01:52:33] He's from Slinger. We're probably murdering some of these names, but that's why she's reading them. Not me. I,

[01:52:46] that's why I went to school for a long time. Should we try the next one? Yeah, we'll just go on and I read a few down the road. Okay. Representative Christine Snick speaking against.[01:53:00]

[01:53:05] Okay. Okay. I'm gonna be brief. I don't have any written statements because I was gonna do that this morning, but I ran into some trouble getting here this morning. But, uh, so I'm State Representative Christine Snicky. I represent, um, the southeast corner of Milwaukee, which is sometimes known as the teacher district 'cause we have so many teachers living in that area.

[01:53:26] And I just wanna give you a little history of my involvement in the, in the residency issue. And, uh, you, it may come as a surprise 'cause 99.9% of the time I will support the teacher's union this time. However, I can't and I never, I never have on this issue. Back when I first ran from Milwaukee School Board, um, the main, the main issue was residency.

[01:53:50] I was somebody that came outta nowhere, nobody knew who I was and I did not support residency. I'm sorry, I supported residency. I won that race with 70% of the vote, [01:54:00] which kind of tells you that people in Milwaukee support the residency rule. As a member of the Milwaukee School Board, we, um, bargained quite a bit on the residency issue.

[01:54:11] And that's my whole point here right now. Teachers do still have the right to bargain. You have not succeeded taking that away from them yet. And this has always been a negotiated issue. This is an issue that should be handled between the school board and the teachers. Teachers have not been able to get this lifted, so they decide to bypass the school board and come to the state.

[01:54:33] Um, I wish there were, there was somebody on this bill that primarily represented Milwaukee. If you look at the sponsors, there's nobody on this bill that represents primarily Milwaukee. And the reason for that is we all know how important it is to keep our tax base in Milwaukee. If I look at my block, I've got four or five, I think it's five teachers that live right on my block.

[01:54:56] Now, I can't say for sure that they would move out, but [01:55:00] imagine a block, one whole block, all of a sudden five for sale signs going up, go right straight through, what is that gonna do to our tax base? So I would ask that this committee not move this, this bill forward. This is a, this is a negotiated item and it needs to be held at the local level.

[01:55:18] So thank you. Thank you. Any questions for Representative Nikki? Not thank, thank you very much, Sarah. Okay. The next speaker is Christine McDonough, speaking against,

[01:55:37] followed by. Okay, let's do that in a minute. And then that will be followed by Will Gruber. Cheryl Brenner. Angie Mc McMan maybe. Hopefully.

[01:55:58] Hi, morning. My name's CT [01:56:00] McDonough and um, I'm here as taxpayer and I am against this bill because I think that, uh, this is a local control issue. I don't believe that the state of Wisconsin should be telling the Milwaukee School District what they should do. And in, uh, response to what Senator Darling said, there are other positions in school boards, uh, in the state of Wisconsin that do have residency requirements, people other than teachers.

[01:56:23] And, uh, I believe that this should be left up to the people of Milwaukee. I think this is being utilized to allow internet schools. I think that this is just opening the door to allow remote teaching through internet schools. No, you're good. I'm sorry this wasn't timed properly. That's all I have to say.

[01:56:41] Okay. Thank you. Is there any questions? Thank you for your concise testimony. We appreciate that very much.

[01:56:52] Will Gruber speaking against, I think he may have left 'cause that's okay.
[01:57:00] Um, he said he was leaving at least. Okay. Go on. Okay. Cheryl Brenner speaking against

[01:57:12] Welcome back. Thank you. Um, I'm here more now. As in my role as a teacher, um, I've been a Milwaukee public school teacher for 16 years, and when I initially started teaching in the district, I very much felt angered by the residency requirement because I felt like I should be able to live where I want. Um, I have seen teachers leave the district or not come to the district because of the re residency rules.

[01:57:40] Um, however, I am very concerned today that this is not a state issue, that this is a local issue. As I look around this room, I do not see a group of people here that adequately represent the ethnic, racial, socioeconomic diversity of the city of Milwaukee. I [01:58:00] feel like we have a bunch of outsiders here making decisions for what's going on in the city and for what's going to impact our kids, our tax base, our schools.

[01:58:11] And you know, I grew up, I'm obviously blonde, blue eyes, light skin. I'm never gonna know what it feels like to walk around with dark skin. I'm never gonna know what it feels like to grow up in poverty, but I've spent the last 16 years of my life learning about those things through my students and through my community and, and I have a much better understanding of those things than I did.

[01:58:35] Before I did that. And I just feel that we are making a very serious mistake getting involved in Milwaukee's business when Milwaukee isn't truly represented here right now. And, and that breaks my heart. I would like to thank Senator Larsson for bringing up his issue. I think the issue about requiring state workers to live in the state very much [01:59:00] parallels the issue of requiring Milwaukee teachers to live in the city of Milwaukee.

[01:59:06] And if we're not willing to discuss the state issue, why are we willing to discuss the Milwaukee issue as a taxpayer in Milwaukee as a homeowner in Milwaukee? I just feel like Milwaukee is being attacked from a bunch of people that don't really have Milwaukee's best interest at heart. And it really scares me and it really makes me sad because we have a lot of kids, a lot of parents who are not able to get up here and speak for themselves, who have not had the formal education enough to really understand what's going on in some of these laws.

[01:59:40] Thank you. Thank you. Is there any questions? Nope. Okay. Next up is Angie McMan from or Speaking against, and then the next ones after that are Paul Zeek maybe, [02:00:00] and then Chris Thi and then Dr. Lawrence Hoffman. Good morning. Good morning. My name is Angie McMannon. As you almost got right, the consonants do confuse a lot of people.

[02:00:12] Um, I'm here as a Milwaukee Public school parent and a tax paying milwaukeean to ask you to please not go ahead with Senate Bill 34. Um, being a milwaukeean reading about what the proposed budget is going to do to municipal aid learning that Milwaukee County Transit Service may need to be either severely cut or possibly exterminated because they're not going to be able to provide service anymore due to the slash and state aid.

[02:00:41] Um, seeing our library hours being chipped away year after year and being able to say to my kids, actually no, we can't go to the library 'cause mom works full time, or Mom's gotta do homework with you in the evenings, and they're not open on Sundays. They close early on Saturdays, they open late on Saturdays.

[02:00:56] I'm very concerned with allowing firefighters, teachers [02:01:00] and police officers to leave the city of Milwaukee and take their tax dollars with them. I feel that between the proposed budget and these residency requirements, you are taking away from the people of Milwaukee and then you're taking away some more.

[02:01:14] I completely agree with Senator Darling that we need to look at the neighborhoods and the schools that aren't performing and where kids aren't succeeding and where they have the most need. But those happen to be the kids who could benefit from free lunch. And free breakfast and after school programs and the proposed budget directly attacks all three of those things.

[02:01:34] And so many other extracurricular, if you will, support services that help those kids. We all agree it's our responsibility to help. Currently. I can go for a run in my neighborhood at nine 30 at night and I don't have to worry about what's gonna happen to me. I don't have a garage. I park on the street. I feel very safe doing that.

[02:01:57] I have many teachers and firefighters in my neighborhood. [02:02:00] You can tell where those people live 'cause they're often the nicest neighborhoods in Milwaukee. And I thank them for that. And when I drive past the empty buildings that some of you up here have agreed are a scar on Milwaukee neighborhoods and negatively impact safety and stability of those neighborhoods.

[02:02:17] I couldn't agree with you more, but I don't understand why you will allow the most stable portion of our tax base to leave the city of Milwaukee and argue that's okay. And yet you're so worried about an empty building. I just don't understand that. And um, I thank you for listening to me and for being here today.

[02:02:40] This is a difficult time for all people involved in the political process. Um, every side of the aisle on your table and over here. So thank you. Thank you very much. Any questions? If not, we appreciate you coming and testifying today.

[02:02:57] Paul [02:03:00] Ek speaking against,

[02:03:07] uh, you did pronounce my name correctly. So that's a major plus. Um, I just wanna say that I am a Milwaukee resident. I'm also a teacher. I teach at Pulaski High School in Milwaukee. And I am adamantly opposed to eliminating the residency requirement. And I'll tell you why. I think what a lot of people have missed out here is that this city has had a, had a history of adamant racism.

[02:03:32] And it is, it is very, very, um, I think there we have made strides, but we have a history of, um, segregation. We're the most second, the second most segregated city in the state or in the, in, in the country for that matter. Um, and I think this would just add to it. I think this is a complete uni unique situation.

[02:03:53] Um, I live in a ci in a neighborhood that borders wauwatosha. Um, I know talking to some of my [02:04:00] neighbors, some of my colleagues, um, some firefighters, police officers, I talked to my relatives that are also, they are very much, a lot of them are, um, scared about this, but there's also a lot of them that say we will move outta the city, unfortunately.

[02:04:15] And I find that very disheartening. I think. That you should live in the city? Um, for many, many reasons. Okay. I think first of all, it's a term of employment. Um, I think that, uh, if, if, you know, the, the city re it's just one of these terms of employment. I'm sorry I'm a little frazzled up here. But anyways, what I'm trying to say is it, it's not a good thing.

[02:04:38] Okay. Um, a lot of friends, I think it also will, um, hurt Wawa tosa. I think it'll hurt the surrounding areas. I think if you saw what happened at Mayfair Mall, um, a couple, couple months ago, I think you're gonna see more of those things. I think you'll see businesses in these neighborhoods that are supported by this group of individ.

[02:04:56] I think they're gonna go, they're, they're gonna be defunct. Why else would [02:05:00] the mayor and everyone on the city council and all these other people be so worried about this, if this was a good thing for the city, a good thing for the schools, I think that, uh, they would be in favor of this. I, and, and I also have to take note with Senator Darling, you said before on the previous, uh, um, Senate, uh, budget bill, he said that, uh, you want to have secure neighborhoods by selling vacant M M P Ss buildings.

[02:05:23] I totally agree with that. I think we should sell vacant m p s buildings, but I also think we shouldn't have, uh, vacant neighborhoods, which could happen. Everyone says, well, these are houses to fill. Someone has to live in them. Yeah. Usually that's correct. But neighborhoods do go on a downward spiral when people leave.

[02:05:39] And a depreciation in the tax value of those homes is gonna go way down. It's about 25%. I bought my home in 2003 in a neighborhood by Mount Mary College. It's gone down by 25%. I, I don't think that's a good thing. And to talk about the teachers, um, saying, well, you don't have qualified candidates in m p s.

[02:05:58] The reason you have your [02:06:00] issues is not just because of the teachers. Okay. There are some bad teachers out there, which, you know, I, I'll admit there are some bad, but they're not the majority. And in time of recession where we have a surplus, we have a, we have a surplus of people applying for these jobs.

[02:06:15] This is not the time to do it. Okay. Um, I have many other points I could make up here. Um, I just think that overall, um, we, we have enough qualified individuals. It's what the school board, what the superintendent, what administrators do in these buildings that has the most effect outta anything. And I think those issues need to be addressed before you can even think about some other things here.

[02:06:38] Thank you very much. Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. Sure. I'd have to go to the audit committee to vote. I'll be right back. Okay. Thank you very much for your testimony. We appreciate you coming over and, and you did a good job. Chris Thiel speaking against, and then I'll just read Dr. Lawrence Hoffman, Justin Williamson, Lorraine [02:07:00] Jacobs, Dan Ross Miller

[02:07:05] right now. Yep. No, no, no. Yeah. Yep. This is.

[02:07:13] Uh, thank you again. Members of the committee, Chris Steele, representing Milwaukee Public Schools, and in the years past as we've had these discussions, uh, we've not had quite the crowd that we have today, and so many of the points that I usually make have in fact been made. But, um, would just like to revisit some of the things that, that have maybe already been mentioned, and we've talked about in years past this.

[02:07:33] This clearly is an issue of local control as has been raised. And this is not, uh, a policy that was put in place, uh, without negotiation between the administration and the school. Uh, the, the, sorry, sorry. The teacher's union. Um, this was a negotiated item that was in fact put in place, uh, years ago, and it has had the side benefits that I think people have talked about today.

[02:07:57] Um, I [02:08:00] appreciate the fact that, um, all the research shows that having really high quality teachers in front of students is what makes the difference. Um, we agree with that, obviously. Um, and I do agree with the gentleman who just spoke that said in particular in this time, and Senator Vine, how asked a question before I went back and took a look at the fiscal bureau note.

[02:08:21] My understanding according to their calculations is that over the two year period, if, if Governor Walker's budget does go in place, we will see a loss just in terms of the revenue limit, um, going down of about \$165 million. So I'd ask, as we have the conversation of what quality means, I would ask as we have the conversation about not only high quality teachers, but enough of them, uh, in front of students, um, as we're looking at a very difficult budget, if there are moments, uh, where the Joint Finance Committee, where the Senate Education Committee consider could consider some of the avenues that we do currently have in place, uh, to improve teaching, such as the Milwaukee Mathematics [02:09:00] Partnership, um, which has improved math scores for students, which has increased the level of, of, of our teaching capacity, which has done a great job in con in concert with, um, the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, um, to keep pushing our current teachers forward so that we have the quality staff that we, that we need to have that I would encourage people to please take another look at those items.

[02:09:23] Um, and as we are in this moment, we still, as you know, n p s, we think bargained a fairly good contract back in October. Um, and, and for the first time got some concessions in terms of, uh, our employees paying into healthcare, uh, et cetera. But obviously if we're gonna see an a hundred, a \$165 million cut before we even start talking about categorical aids, um, we need to still have some leverage to open that conversation.

[02:09:51] Um, I think over the past four or five years that we've talked about this issue, there hasn't been. A sense on the side of the M T E A that they need to engage in the [02:10:00] discussion. Uh, because as they looked at what was going on up here, they thought that that, uh, perhaps they don't have to negotiate this issue.

[02:10:08] Um, and, and that's been unfortunate. Uh, we would say, um, I'd also like to just follow up on what we're hearing and because in years past, we've had conversations about whether or not this would in fact diminish the property value in the city of Milwaukee. And I can tell you that personally over the last couple of years as this issue has come up, uh, in my position, people would come to me and, and raise a question of, is this or is this not going to happen?

[02:10:31] And obviously this year, uh, uh, this issue's been raised again, and there's that same level of concern. And I literally, every other day, if not more, I'm in conversations with people who are very scared about the diminishment of their, their property value. They are having conversations about, uh, not that they want to leave the city, they have an affection for the city, but have a very real fear that if they're the last ones to get that yard sign up, um, that they lose out.

[02:10:58] And so [02:11:00] we have a concern, uh, as Senator Jou alluded to about how, you know, this, this piece of, uh, uh, this bargained item, um, has established a community in the city of Milwaukee as parents have attested to, uh, that has not only kept up the property value, but that has kept concerned citizens in our neighborhoods and have kept concerned citizens focused on our schools.

[02:11:23] And we think that, uh, it's important that we be, continue to allow it to be, uh, to negotiate this at the local level. Okay. Thank you. Is there any questions for Chris? Uh, Senator Grossman? Yeah, I have a few questions. Uh, we had a similar bill up yesterday, um, dealing with the Milwaukee Police and Fire Department.

[02:11:42] Um, and they, they gave us quite a few statistics, and I was hoping to hear the same from you. Um, um, first of all, when you have an opening for a teacher in M P Ss, how many slots do you fill? Or how many, how many, how many people apply for that job? [02:12:00] For let's just this way, let's get a last year. How many openings did, or how many new teachers did you hire for M P Ss?

[02:12:06] I, I don't have that information with me. I would tell you that the number's been going up because as we've been laying people off, obviously as was mentioned earlier, that there are more candidates out there, uh, applying for jobs.

Um, I think we also probably have, uh, some areas where that are kind of hard to fill that other districts have special education, higher level mathematics, et cetera.

[02:12:27] But that, I don't think that's an issue necessarily of the residency requirement, but just Okay. Getting quality people there. Well, I, I'll, I'll tell you what I wanna know and then I tell you why I want you to give 'em to me. Sure. Yesterday, just quite frankly, um, I, I think the city of Milwaukee did a little better job of defending their residency requirement.

[02:12:47] And one of the ways they defended it is they told us how many applicants they had for each position. The reason people will pass this bill, and the reason I'm on this bill is [02:13:00] I'm under the impression that you could improve Milwaukee schools if you would have access to some good teachers you didn't have access to.

[02:13:07] Now. So what I am asking you for is a list, even maybe even by job description of the number of applicants who you feel are qualified applicants for each open position opening. Now, the second question I have for you, I is, yesterday when, uh, the city was here, they were able to present to us statistics showing that almost no Milwaukee police and fire left the city.

[02:13:38] I think the statistics were something like, I dunno, last year, last five years or something, there were like 900 firemen in the city of Milwaukee and two had left employment. So in other words, it was a pretty good job. Everybody who was in Milwaukee firemen kept being a Milwaukee firemen. They weren't, they, they apparently it wasn't such a hardship to stay in Milwaukee that they left.

[02:13:57] What I'd like to know from you, and what you really quite [02:14:00] should have had today is, um, a list of the total number of m p s teachers and the number of teachers who leave each year. Not teachers who leave because they've reached full retirement, not teachers who leave because you fire them or push them out, but teachers who are leaving apparently for another reason.

[02:14:22] And the reason I'm asking for those statistics, if it's a parent, a sizable number of teachers are leaving who are not being pushed out, then there's an indication that that residency requirement is costing you good teachers. And we should put the children first. If it, if it turns out that like the Milwaukee police and fire almost nobody is leaving, then there'd be an indication that, you know, the residency requirement is not a hindrance to keeping good teachers.

[02:14:48] But I, I'd like you to get me those statistics. Sure. I certainly could, and my apologies for not bringing those today. I would say however, that we are losing access to high quality teachers right now because the state [02:15:00] has not moved forward in fixing the funding system, um, over the last 15 years. Um, and certainly some of our high, high quality people are, are being laid off simply because as we look at this upcoming budget, the resources that are being provided or not being provided rather, um, push us into that situation.

[02:15:20] So I can certainly get you those figures. Again, my apologies, uh, but I, I'd also ask for consideration on that point s Go ahead. Since you brought it up, um, I am somewhat familiar with school finance and obviously many districts have my, but okay, let, let's, I'll bill and I'll ask the question. Um, what type of health insurance do you have with M p s Glenn, that has nothing.

[02:15:45] It has a lot to do with what he's saying. No, no, no. Let's, okay. Senator Joke. Yeah. Thank you. Let, let me, it, it, we do raise an interesting question of, um, I don't know how easy it's gonna be to sell a home in [02:16:00] Milwaukee and move, but here, here's the, the bigger question. Uh, when you have an, when you have a opening for a teaching position, how many applications do you receive for those positions?

[02:16:11] I, again, I'm sorry, I don't have the information. I think that's gonna be really important. My, my suspicion is it's substantial, number one. Number two, are you aware of any evidence that you have a lack of qualified teachers who are applying for positions in Milwaukee? No, I think that's the heart of the matter.

[02:16:30] I remember the definition of a teacher in Milwaukee, uh, was when I spent a day in Milwaukee Public Schools. This is quite a few years ago. And at the end of the day, three 15 in the afternoon, the second grade teacher was buttoning, buckling, or zipping the jackets of every one of those children and giving them a hug.

[02:16:51] She had a smile on her face. And I, and I, I think that's my definition of a dedicated qualified [02:17:00] teacher. And, and I say to the audience, and I don't say this on behalf the chair, we really can't have applause because people have different points of view. You don't want to get into applaud or jeers. It's, it's tempting, but we, we really shouldn't have that.

[02:17:14] Uh, you have to hold your breath. Uh, but I, I think those are important points because teachers for some reason have become public enemy number one in

this state and country, and they should be public envy, number one. So please provide us that information. Thanks, Christian. Glenn has a question on point.

[02:17:34] Yeah. Uh, yeah. Um, I'll give you another thing that you ought to give us. I am under the impression from past anecdotes that m p s has to hire more people who are not, don't meet the full license requirement than other districts right now. In other words, then they have to go back to school. They have to ask for a waiver to get these people to teach here.

[02:17:56] I might be wrong, but that's another thing you can give us [02:18:00] information on, which would be an indication as to whether or not you're getting qualified teachers under the current system. You know, how often when you hire somebody having to go to, to, um, D P I and say, you know, can we, can we put this person in this slot and they'll go back to school and within, you know, whatever, two or three years they'll be licensed.

[02:18:21] So I like that information too. If I could follow up that, that is the case there again, in, in some of these difficult to fill the areas, fill areas, we have emergency licensure procedures, uh, that move forward. And I can certainly provide you that information. Yeah, I, I think all schools do what we, is it the percent about the same?

[02:18:38] Okay. That's the big thing. I mean, it's, it's not only Milwaukee, it's all over that. Sometimes there's areas that are tougher to fill and so they have to do that. So. That would be great information for us to determine the need or not need of the spill. We appreciate that. Okay.

[02:18:59] Dr. Lauren? [02:19:00] Sorry. Oh, excuse me, Chris. Sorry. Go ahead. Okay, thank you. Um, Chris, thank you, uh, for coming up today. Um, it's an honor to serve you as your state senator. Um, I just had a question if you, uh, if you requested this legislation? No. Okay. So the, the information that's being requested, this is, this is you, you are basically on the defense of this legislation right now.

[02:19:29] Well, we're certainly opposed to the bill and, uh, you know, I, you know, it's my job to certainly provide these pieces of information. I, again, sorry, I didn't have 'em today, but certainly we can get them to you very quickly. But again, no, we, m p s did not require this or ask for, uh, just go. If this was, uh, up in referendum in our neighborhood in Milwaukee, what do you think the results of that referendum would be?

[02:19:51] It's a difficult question to ask. I mean, answer, but I think, um, again, as some of some property owners and some, I guess [02:20:00] neighbors have attested to that, it would, it would meet with a significant response that this is not what people in the city of Milwaukee want. Mm-hmm. Um, I guess I can only say based on, based on what I've heard, that that is what I would expect to happen.

[02:20:14] Yeah. I would, I would agree. Um, and I would, I would further in, uh, in making sure that my neighbor is defended. And, and, uh, what was, what Senator Grothman was asking is I would hope that when we're making policy changes to, uh, what is happening in my community and my neighborhood, that we don't do it with a, uh, uh, experimental mentality that perhaps maybe this might change things, um, without having those statistics beforehand.

[02:20:44] Um, it's my theory as a legislator that we should pursue problems that exist, um, and not ones that possibly could maybe exist. And then we'll, we'll tinker with it and see what happens. So, and thank you again. Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you. [02:21:00] Okay. Now, Dr. Lawrence Hoffman speaking against, and maybe I'll just read Justin Williamson, Lorraine Jacobs.

[02:21:13] Dan Ross Miller, Perry Buck should be.

[02:21:21] Thank you. Um, Mr. Chairman, a member of the committee asked, uh, Chris Thiel of m p s to do some research. Um, but I'm wondering before a committee proposes overturning a system, uh, shouldn't they have done the research?

[02:21:41] I don't know what, that's, what, that's what hearings are for, is. Getting information. So, um, I'm wondering what percent of teachers in the Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh schools live [02:22:00] outside of the city, um, if M P Ss teachers were allowed to do so, um, what percent of teachers would be moving out?

[02:22:10] Uh, I think before you vote on SV 34, uh, you should, uh, see that that research is done. When I applied to teach in m p s back in 1995, I was surprised that there was a residency requirement. And, uh, when I went looking for a place to live, I found that, uh, in, in consistent with my suburban background, I was, I was looking at suburban places and I was not allowed to settle in in any of them because they were outside of the city limits.

[02:22:45] And I eventually found a place inside the city limits that was, that was okay. But after a while teaching, I realized that there was no problem living within

the [02:23:00] city limits. It wasn't a big sprawling suburban home. But I have made a commitment, I had made a commitment at that time to the people of the city, and especially to the kids of Milwaukee.

[02:23:15] I, and living in the city helped me make that commitment.

[02:23:25] Um, it's been said that the residency requirement will help children get the best possible education, regardless of the zip code or specific geographical region that teachers live in. But if that's so important to remove the geographical barriers for teachers, I'm wondering why not make it easier for city kids to attend suburban schools, remove geographical barriers for city kids.

[02:23:55] I think that's true. And finally, a couple of points that, [02:24:00] uh, Willie Hines, Milwaukee Common Council President has made. I think they're excellent points. Many private sector companies have conditions of employment. Why should government not have the right, have the right to do so? And finally, Willie Hines said, we want all of our city employees to have a personal stake in Milwaukee's success.

[02:24:28] It's vital that a city employee not harbor the same disdain for city neighborhoods that saturates this state legislation. Best qualified candidates for city employment are those individuals who intimately understand the city. No one cares more for a community than the residents of that community.

[02:24:48] Those are the kinds of employees our taxpayers deserve. Thank you. Thank you. Any questions? No. Justin Williamson [02:25:00] speaking against,

[02:25:08] I'd like to thank everyone again for having me here. Um, I'd like to thank Senator Darling for joining us again. Uh, I feel that her absence for Mr. Be testimony was very indicative of her, her feelings for this matter. I think that he No, no, no. She had to go vote. She had no choice. Okay. In when she had to go.

[02:25:31] Okay. Well, so don't, please don't go down that road. Okay. Well, I just think that, uh, he had something very important to say about this matter. His position gives him that this is a testimony, uh, or committee for these matters. And if you wanna have dialogue, I think that that's something that was important to be heard.

[02:25:55] Um, my personal opinion on this matter is that [02:26:00] I'm against it. I feel that this is our matter. This is not nicollette's matter. Um, and I guess that's all then. Thank you. Okay. Thank you.

[02:26:16] Lorraine Jacobs speaking against

[02:26:31] if I don't have a heart attack after this. I don't know. I guess I won't for a while. Um, this is very nerve wracking, but I appreciate your taking the time to listen to all of us. Um, I'm here to speak totally against this bill. I feel that there are many reasons that it should not be even included in a budget bill.

[02:26:53] But, um, once again, my first point is that I am [02:27:00] seeing this kernel of negativity and meanness in this bill. Um, I don't know if you understand how you sound when you say, um, Senator Darling, that, um, we currently have inferior teachers because we have a residency requirement and we're making them live in the city of Milwaukee.

[02:27:23] But if we had not had the residency requirement, we'd have such sterling teachers to replace them. And I'm thinking, how can you say that about the people who I know very well, relatives and friends who are working very hard in teaching in Milwaukee public schools? Um, Shame on you for putting the blame of economic and society ills on the teachers and to compare teachers with firefighters and policemen in re in, uh, relation to their residents.

[02:27:58] Requirement is like [02:28:00] comparing apples and oranges. Firemen and policemen are not being vilified in the media, in the public attention as you are doing here for teachers. So it's a, it's a lot of pressure. Teaching is a high pressure job and, um, this kind of in appreciation by such very respected people is not making this job any easier for the teachers.

[02:28:24] So, um, I think you're making a large assumption that residency requirement is, um, a key factor in teachers' decisions of where they live. So I shame on you for making that assumption. Um, also, I just wanted to mention that, um, I get it. When Senator Larsson was talking about the comparison of the state having a requirement for residency, I get the connection.

[02:28:51] It means that there are requirements for employment and living within the state of Wisconsin. If you are employee of Wisconsin, means that you [02:29:00] are a part of the community in which you're serving. And to be a politician and have

to live within the area in which you represent also means that you are then involved in the community in which you are serving.

[02:29:13] So I don't see how that was a confusing, uh, statement for him to have made. Um,

[02:29:25] uh, I also am questioning the need of the body of whoever was promoting this bill to reach into Milwaukee and Metal with local control the way you are doing. Um, I think, uh, the m p s management needs your support rather than your negativity and your interference. And I don't think that you are doing anything to help the city of Milwaukee or the m p s, even though your words say that you, you are, um, I don't understand why it's necessary to be in [02:30:00] line with other cities, uh, if it's working for Milwaukee.

[02:30:04] And I haven't seen anything that you've presented that said it's not working for Milwaukee, that we can't continue with this. If no one in Milwaukee is asking for this change to be made, um, your, your, your time is up. Oh, I have three questions for Senator Darling. How can I get them to her? You can talk to her afterwards.

[02:30:25] You can email 'em. She'd be, I didn't know I had a time limit. Yeah. Three minutes.

[02:30:33] Okay. We have a lot of people to thank you. Yeah. We have a lot of people to testify, so we wanna make sure they all have an opportunity. Well, Yep. So, well, thank you

[02:30:48] Dan Ross Miller from the Wisconsin. Sure. Uh, ju-just a, a comment, um, I I'm really glad to have this, uh, hearing and I'm very happy and, and I respect all of your [02:31:00] opinions, but I do have to clarify, I never said inferior teachers. Uh, I did not, I did not say that. And I just have to make sure that we, that that's my integrity.

[02:31:11] I never said inferior teachers. I have a great deal of respect for teachers. I talked about teachers, right, to live where they wanted to and not be restricted by the state to be, have to live in Milwaukee, given the freedom. I never talked about inferior teachers. I made a very strong comment of being very interested to deal with the education committee, to strengthen public education throughout our state and to look at areas where they are having a very rough time and to do all we can to strengthen education, the for the children, the parents, and the community.

[02:31:46] So you, I, I'm very happy to be here. I respect you, but I did not say that. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Dan, are you talking this time? I am. And I, uh, apologize. I had my tongue. I couldn't think of the word register [02:32:00] changed from speaking to registering previously, but thank you for allowing me to comment. Uh, Senate Bill 34 does three things.

[02:32:08] One is it makes residency requirements a prohibited subject of collective bargaining. Uh, second, it defines teacher for purposes of residency requirements. And three, it provides that a school board may not require as a condition of employment that a teacher reside within a school district. One of the things that distorts collective bargaining is when one or both sides come to the legislature to try and get things changed that they don't like.

[02:32:42] And typically what happens is if you have something that you want to get in the contract that you can't get through bargaining, you come to the legislature and you ask that it be made a mandatory subject of bargaining. The converse of that is that if you have something that's in the contract and you want to get it out, you come to the legislature and say, please make this a prohibited subject of bargaining.
[02:33:00]

[02:33:00] This is not a bill that the Milwaukee Public Schools have asked for. Uh, it's, we see it as a matter of local control. Um, this provision, as has been stated, was, uh, got into the contract through collective bargaining. We believe it, it, um, should come out of the contract through collective bargaining, through a process that gives the school board some leverage to get something for what it gives.

[02:33:27] And that's enough said on that. I do wanna point out that there may be an unintended consequence of the way the bill is drafted. Uh, the way teacher is defined, it means any person holding a license or permit issued by the state superintendent whose employment by a school district requires that he or she hold that license or permit under our state school standards statute section 121.01.

[02:33:55] One A one. Uh, each school board [02:34:00] shall ensure that every teacher, supervisor, administrator, and professional staff member holds a certificate, license, or permit to teach, issued by the DPI before entering on the duties for that position. So what this, what this bill does by broadly defining teacher as any person, um, whose employment requires them to hold a license inadvertently catches up principals, administrators, and others in this requirement.

[02:34:30] And I'm not sure that's what you want to do. I think there may be some value for districts in requiring that their, their superintendent, for example, live within the district. So thank you for your attention. Okay. Thank you. Any questions? No. Thank you very much.

[02:34:49] Okay. Next we have Perry Bach speaking against, and then I'm just gonna read the next four after that we have Katie Reer, uh, Dr. Renee [02:35:00] Antrop Gonzalez, and then Nancy Ketchum

[02:35:07] Perry. If any of those three are in here, just 'cause that's, I think that's the last three, correct? That's the last four. Yeah, our last four.

[02:35:20] Okay. Um, Katie Reader, I,

[02:35:29] Dr. Gon an Gonzalez. Is that person around anywhere? Okay.

[02:35:40] Nancy Ketchum.

[02:35:45] What we will do then is change those folks from, uh, speaking against, to registering against, uh, unless they come in here shortly, then we will. Is that all that? [02:36:00] Um, unless these Terry Schwans is here or Will Gruber? Yep, that's it.

[02:36:09] Kate Reader. Okay. Wonderful. Come on. I'm sorry. I was in. Okay. That's all right. We're ready for you to testify.

[02:36:22] I'm Katie Reader. I live in the town of Middleton and button. I think it's button pressing. It's, I think it's on, you just gotta go a little closer. It's okay. Yeah, Katie Reeder from the town of Middleton. And, um, I'm here to speak against this bill, but most of the other people have already expressed my feelings of what I have to say.

[02:36:48] So I'm going to just in two sentences address something that Senator Darling said. Um, my Senator Erba was representing me and speaking for me when he left [02:37:00] the state because that provided us all the people of Wisconsin, the opportunity to take the time to look at the so-called budget repair bill that was being slammed through in record time.

[02:37:13] So, um, I was offended by the, what I consider to be a snide remark about the senators leaving. Um, 'cause I appreciate everything that they have done and

we've learned a lot more about these bills, um, with their having slowed the process down and, um, we all know better what's being pushed through here.

[02:37:38] Thank you very much for the opportunity. Okay. Thank you for your testimony. Let's try it one more time and see what happens. I, okay. Perry Buck, Nancy Keman. Is that, is that you? Okay, great. [02:38:00]

[02:38:02] Welcome. Hello. Thank you for letting me speak. Um, I am here representing, um, the city of Milwaukee and I'm a Milwaukee citizen and m p s parent and I oppose this bill. I want to say that I, I completely agree with Senator Darling. Um, it is true that the two key indicators of academic success are parental involvement and community support.

[02:38:24] But to me, community means active local participation. These people live in the city, participate in the community, understand on a deep personal level what it means to live in the city. When you don't see family struggling with unemployment, poverty, and homelessness, then you can't understand the challenges faced by your students and parents on a daily basis.

[02:38:51] When you don't see, as I do looking out my kitchen window, mothers taking two buses at 6:00 AM with toddlers in [02:39:00] tow to take their older kids to the school across the street and then turn around and take your toddlers to a daycare center and then go to work and do this day after day. Then you can't understand why some parents find it hard to participate in school activities.

[02:39:19] And when you don't see the joy and opportunity that's available throughout Milwaukee, then you can't understand why we, m p s parents and Milwaukee residents are so proud of living in the city of Milwaukee. My second point briefly is that I am really offended that some teachers apparently, or according to some assumptions that people have, that they don't have a nice place to live in the city.

[02:39:49] I live in the 53212 zip code of Milwaukee. And if you do your research, you'll find it's one of the highest poverty levels in the city. And I love living there.

[02:40:00] And I am offended at the assumptions that there are no good neighborhoods. There are many, many great neighborhoods in this city, and not all of them are in the pockets at budding the suburbs.

[02:40:11] I have no patience with those kind of arguments. And frankly, if teachers wanna live anywhere else, I welcome that there are plenty of great school districts in

this state where they can work. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. Um, do you want we get any more? Not that we haven't read a few times.

[02:40:32] Okay. Let's just do it one more time and then give everybody a, a chance. Okay. Perry Buck, Terry Wanes And Will Gruber. Okay. Now we will end that hearing and change those from speaking against, to registering against, and that will conclude the hearing on Senate Bill 34. We will then go to [02:41:00] this, uh, hearing on Senate bill to,

[02:41:08] there was, there was a couple, two or three, I don't know.

[02:41:17] Yeah, it'll all be, she'll, she'll, she'll, she'll all be entered in Comm Clerk. So you can look at the, um, committee. It'll be on the electronic record. Yep. Okay. Okay. The next bill we are going to hear is Senate Bill 22. And we have Senator Darling testifying along with, you've asked some folks to join you.

[02:41:34] Yes. Yes. Um, Mr. Uh, Mr. Chairman, if, uh, Todd Zebert and John Gee and Dennis contact could join me, then you don't just have to hear from me. It might help, uh, save time, move things along, and then we can hear from more people. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Sure. Just a second. Lemme get this. [02:42:00]

[02:42:18] Thank you again Mr. Chairman for, uh, hearing, uh, Senate Bill 22. Um, a, a charter school reform bill. Just wanna give you a little history of, um, my involvement in charter schools. I was the original author of the charter school legislation, I think it was like in 1992 or 93. And, um, when I looked at, um, what other states were doing around the country, and when I received a report that said that Wisconsin's Charter School, um, was, was in need of providing some other options in their charter school package and options for communities and parents to have quality [02:43:00] schools and in the public education system, I looked at that report and I started to work with people throughout the state to say, you know, what do we need to do to have a charter school offering within the state of Wisconsin that meets the needs of communities, parents and children?

[02:43:18] And when I was working with, uh, Marsha Stein, who is one of my constituents, and she has been a leader in the charter school movement, and again, I repeat, charter schools are public schools. So it's an option for communities, parents and other educators, other children to work to in their communities, to establish a, a charter school that will meet the needs of the children, to have the best education possible for those children.

[02:43:48] And so what happens is these charter schools end up becoming public schools and, and they have a lot of different options and a lot of different, uh, modalities and ways of [02:44:00] operating. And I looked and I thought, you know, we have to look at best practices. We have to look at accountability. We have to look at how are, how are we doing in terms of student outcomes to make sure we, we have, uh, the very best options possible.

[02:44:14] And when I was working with Marsha and, and touring her schools, uh, she has what are called, uh, two R schools, and she has instrumentality schools. And for those of you who, uh, may not know, there are two types of charter schools. One is an instrumentality where you are chartered by a school district, the other is a two R, and you're an independent charter school and you're, you're chartered by an authorizer.

[02:44:38] And authorizers are limited in Wisconsin at this point. And so this bill, uh, endeavors to give more options to more people around the state to, to authorize and have different options. We have, uh, two art schools only in Milwaukee and, and only in Racine for one particular, um, area. And only through, [02:45:00] um, the U W M and, uh, M A T C and, um, through the charters, through the school district.

[02:45:07] And when I looked, when I was talking with Martha Marsha, she was showing me her, her schools, and I was so impressed with the, the outcomes, the educational outcomes that her school. Provided, and this does not mean that other schools do not provide outcomes, but she has schools in really challenging areas of the city and, and the community tried to say, okay, we're gonna have, we're going to have a different option for different children for different reasons, but we will be accountable.

[02:45:38] When I went to those schools, as I do the Milwaukee public schools and I see so many good things happening, you know, I started working with her and saying, what could we do to strengthen educational opportunity for all children within the public school system? She started to, to work out different options with me, and then I was, I was, uh, told there was a whole statewide [02:46:00] network involved in the very issue that we were involved in, and that's where the gentleman joining me, uh, come to play.

[02:46:07] So I, I was, I approached them and, and we decided we should all work together because they represent a massive network of, uh, children and families and organizations who are working together to give the best options that we can for the charter public schools. And as I mentioned earlier in my testimony on other bills,

I think it's up to our education committee and our legislature to do all we can to strengthen education for all of our children so that we can have the best outcomes for all of our children.

[02:46:41] And this isn't gonna be a one size fits all. And so whatever I say is not to say this is a negative on the public education system, because what I do is, I mentioned to you before I look at performance, I look at schools that are doing really well and I look at schools that are struggling. And [02:47:00] I think it's our option to strengthen the schools who are doing really well and say, God bless you, continue your work.

[02:47:06] But it's very much our obligation to look at areas where there is low performance and, and there are outcomes that are not acceptable for those children and for those parents and for those communities. And to give all of our citizens the opportunity to have the best education system possible within the public education system.

[02:47:26] When I look at that and I look at performance, I see a lot of stars, but I also see a lot of weaknesses. And we can't hide the fact that there are very good schools in our, our state. And there are, there are also a lot of schools that are struggling. So I think the options that we can give our parents and children in our communities within the public education system are extremely important today.

[02:47:50] And I'm not gonna turn my back and say Those kids can wait. Those kids can wait. Those kids can wait because they don't happen to [02:48:00] be in a neighborhood that has access to. A school that meets their needs. I'm not gonna say those children can wait because I'll tell you what, 30 years ago I chaired one another.

[02:48:09] Life goals for a Greater Milwaukee 2000. It was targeting, it was the community leaders of all, all across the city who targeted key issues and visions that, that we had for 2000. And, and as we went through this huge community process, the number one issue was the quality of education and op and quality educational outcomes in the city.

[02:48:33] That was, gosh, that was almost 30 years ago. And still, if we did that same community brainstorming session today, I bet we would come up with the same, the same issue that is quality of education that we have to address in the Milwaukee area. And we weren't just dealing with one size type, all fits all people.

[02:48:53] It was a broad community effort. So when I sit here today, I'm gonna tell you I can't wait any longer. We can't wait any [02:49:00] longer. God bless the schools that are working, wonderful teachers, wonderful sacrifice, wonderful passion. But there are pockets of our schools and our area throughout the state that need help.

[02:49:14] And if there are groups of parents and communities that wanna do things differently in the public education system, I think we should support them as long as we have accountability for the dollars invested, as long as we have transparencies in terms of what, what is being offered in terms of curriculum and in terms of that we have access and, and availability to get outcome evaluation.

[02:49:38] And I just want the gentleman to join me. I'm not gonna talk about the particular aspects of the bill. They will, I don't wanna duplicate, I just wanna introduce Todd Ziebart, who's a, um, a part of a broad national, um, network. And he'll give you the national overview. John g will give you the state environment and how we are working as a [02:50:00] state massive grassroots effort to try to work together.

[02:50:04] And Dennis Con will give you a Milwaukee perspective. So with that, uh, Todd, uh, John and Dennis will get into the particulars of the bill and I will wrap up after they've made their comments. And then we very much welcome your questions and we very much welcome your participation in this effort because the effort is not to be negative about the, the public education system in the state.

[02:50:28] The whole point of this is to strengthen our public education system to have more chances for all children to succeed and to have accountability and transparency. So with that, Todd, would you like to lead off? Todd? You got, you got three?

[02:50:48] Good afternoon. Could you just press your button? Is this on? Yep. Good afternoon. Uh, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, as Senator Darling said, I'm uh, Todd Ziebarth and I'm with the National [02:51:00] Alliance for Public Charter Schools. Uh, we are a national nonprofit organization, uh, solely committed to advancing the public charter school movement.

[02:51:08] Our ultimate goal is to increase the number of high quality public charter schools available to all families, but we're particularly interested in providing more opportunities to families whose access to high quality public education is currently

limited. Uh, as one way of doing so. We advocate for better federal and state public policies supporting charter schools, which is why I'm here today.

[02:51:29] Uh, I just wanna say a brief word about, uh, the national picture and then talk, uh, a bit about the particulars of the bill. In my, uh, time here today, uh, across the country, it's an exciting time for the charter school movement, but also a challenging time. Uh, we're witnessing steady growth in the sector, about 400 new schools opening each year, about 150,000 new students enrolling each year.

[02:51:51] Uh, but there's still a tremendous pent up demand from teachers and parents for more public charter schools. We currently have about 400,000 students nationally on waiting list to get [02:52:00] into charter schools. We're also seeing stellar achievement results in public charter schools in a growing number of states, uh, like Indiana, Massachusetts, and New York.

[02:52:09] Uh, and our highest performing charter schools across the country, like Milwaukee College Prep and Bruce Guadalupe Charter School in Milwaukee, are shattering, longstanding low expectations about what poor students in particular can achieve in public schools. Um, lastly, we continue to enjoy broad bipartisan support for charters across the country.

[02:52:29] Sure, yep. At the federal level, uh, there has long been administrative support from, uh, George h w Bush to Bill Clinton, to George W. Bush, to Barack Obama now who's pledged to double the federal funds available for startup grants for public charter schools. And at the state level, we've been fortunate enough to have support from governors and legislators of both parties going back 20 years.

[02:52:51] And I think what's common among all of these folks is they recognize that charter schools, uh, are one piece of the puzzle. They're not the silver bullet, they're not the end all be all, but they can [02:53:00] play a constructive role as we work to close achievement gaps between groups of students in states, across the country.

[02:53:07] Now the bill, uh, before you Senate bill 22, uh, improves Wisconsin's charter law in a number of different ways. Um, before I get into some of those particulars, I'll just say that the National Alliance evaluates each state's charter law against our model law that we produced two years ago. And that model law really looks at the lessons we've learned across the country about what has worked in charter schools and what hasn't worked.

[02:53:30] Because, as I mentioned, while in some states like Indiana, Massachusetts, and New York, we're seeing really strong results in the charter sectors because of strong laws. In some other places like Ohio, uh, the laws haven't been as strong and the results haven't been as positive. So we've tried to, uh, candidly assess what has worked and what hasn't created a model law, and then evaluated each state's charter law against it.

[02:53:51] And in our recent report, we ranked Wisconsin's law number 34 out of 41 jurisdictions with charter school laws. And the primary reasons that [02:54:00] Wisconsin's law is lacking is it fails to provide the essential autonomy and flexibility to teachers and administrators and parents at the school level to be able to innovate around educational programming, curriculum, staffing and budgeting.

[02:54:14] And so, uh, really a lot of what is in Senate Bill 22 is, is attempting to get more autonomy and flexibility to charter schools across the state. Thank you very much, Todd. Sure. Okay. And the next, uh, speaker will be John g John represents the Wisconsin Charter School Association. Okay, I hope you can hear me.

[02:54:35] Somebody, somebody over here has a beautiful shirt that says, I love my public schools, and I certainly share that sentiment. I love public schools. I love public school districts, and I love charter schools. Uh, charter schools are meant to be the r and d for public school districts, and they're a full part of the village idea that was talked about before.

[02:54:56] I'm even gonna say that you're gonna hear a lot of opposition to this bill [02:55:00] today, and I'm gonna agree with a lot of the opposition that people voice today. The unfortunate part is that much of that opposition isn't in the bill, and in fact, the bill itself is meant to allay those concerns. And I want to cover some of those issues so that the discussion remains on what is actually in the bill.

[02:55:16] First of all, this is a bill about public charter schools. It's not a bill about private or voucher schools. Secondly, this bill requires charter school teachers to be licensed, just like any other public school teacher, there is nothing in this bill that weakens the licensing requirements for charter schools.

[02:55:34] Uh, number two, uh, the state board that this bill, uh, creates, does have qualifications for the appointment. Some people have said it doesn't, and it should, and all the appointments to that board cannot be made from one party. Every third appointment has to be made from a different party. Number three, there's the idea

that this bill privatizes schools by, in, in encouraging a, [02:56:00] a vast array of for-profit schools.

[02:56:02] That is not the case. This bill strengthens public schools and requires all charter schools to be non-profit organizations. Number four, people have said that this bill will allow charter schools to cream kids and just take any kid they want and not have to take kids with special problems. Not true.

[02:56:18] This bill for the first time actually requires that all charter schools must use a random process for admission. And number five, some people will say that there are studies showing that charter schools are not high performing. And that is true in some states. That is not true. In Wisconsin, in every area of the state where there's a large cluster of charter schools, the best performing charter schools are the highest performing schools in the district.

[02:56:43] And lastly, people will say that this takes away money from public schools. It doesn't take away money from public schools. Charter schools are public schools saying that money allocated to charter schools takes away money from public schools is like saying allocating money to tech colleges takes away money from high schools.[02:57:00]

[02:57:00] We have a diverse system. The question we have to answer is, do we want a monolithic public school system in which we pipe all the available educational resources into that one system? And we, we don't care about the number of kids that aren't performing. Or do we want a village that really has a diverse system?

[02:57:20] I think we need a diverse system and not a company town. The reality is the independent charter schools, which are now confined to Milwaukee, are educating kids at \$7,775 a kid, as opposed to 10,500 to \$11,000 a child for traditional public schools. So in fact, they're not taking away money from taxpayers.

[02:57:42] At the end of the day, this is a social justice issue. If you do not have the money to exercise your right to get out of a school that you don't think will meet the needs of your kids, then you need to have a public choice. And charter schools [02:58:00] are that public choice. Thank you. And next will be, um, Dennis.

[02:58:07] Uh, thank you Senator. Joining. Senator Dennis, turn your mic on and speak. Senator Olsson, members of the committee. Um, for the past 18 months, over 35 organizations have been meeting in the city of Milwaukee, teachers, principals, comptrollers administrators, heads of foundations, in order to determine what is

necessary to, uh, grow quality independent charter schools in the city of Milwaukee and minimize the obstacles and the impediments that interfere with that growth, that organization, uh, together with Senator Darlene and her colleagues bring you Senate Bill 22 Today.

[02:58:51] The items in Senate Bill 22 have been identified by charter schools in the city of Milwaukee as the essential components of a quality [02:59:00] educational charter system. There are 9,000, uh, students in the city of Milwaukee now attending 27 charter schools. And I address, um, and I address now I address Mya Senator Jock, whose values I shared for many years and whose service I honor, and also to my senator, Senator Larsson, who has brought a high level of quality representation to our district.

[02:59:27] And I thank him for that. Those 9,000 students that are now in 27 charter schools is likely to grow in the next five years to 18,000 students. Now, you ask yourself what is promoting another 9,000 students and their parents to choose charter schools? And the answer is that they are not receiving the quality education that they feel they should receive from alternative systems.

[02:59:57] Either voucher programs which are leaving or [03:00:00] Milwaukee public school system have no doubt. Incidentally, the organization that I represent, the Milwaukee Charter School advocates favors quality m p s schools, but it also favors alternatives which provide quality charter public schools to parents whose children they believe are not receiving that education.

[03:00:21] Senate bill, uh, 22 does in fact, um, address a subject that John spoke about a moment ago. It is true that not all charter schools are performing as a high level. Some charter schools are performing no better than poor traditional public schools. Some charter schools are performing at an average level.

[03:00:43] Other charter schools in the city of Milwaukee are among the best charter schools in the country. And you may ask yourself, what accounts for this uneven quality? Well, uh, first of all, we have one of the worst charter school laws in the country. We are here be, uh, before you today [03:01:00] because you cannot grow quality charter schools we'll put of the worst charter school laws in the country.

[03:01:06] If this bill becomes law and its provisions are now used by charter schools in the city of Milwaukee, in the state of Wisconsin, we will have one of the best charter school laws in the country that will address quality. Another reason for the

uneven quality is that it has taken charter schools a while to close poor performing schools.

[03:01:24] And the last three years we have done so, eight poor performing charter schools have been shut down. That policy will continue in the future under this bill because our objective, our mission, is only to promote quality independent charter schools. And we feel that the capacity to do that is contained in the provisions which are before you in Senate bill 22.

[03:01:45] Okay. Thank you Mr. Chairman. I, I'm, I'm the caboose. If I may just go over the bullet points of what is in the bill specifically. There's a, a paper that is, uh, Entitled Summary of Senate Bill 22 Charter School [03:02:00] expansion written, uh, from the fiscal Bureau by Layla Merrifield. And if you have that, that would be good.

[03:02:06] We tried to pass that out, but I'm just gonna give you the bullet points and I'll be glad to share that with you too. And I, I provided you my testimony. What it does specifically is provides an additional public school education option for families. As we've said currently, independent charter schools only operate in the Milwaukee and Racine areas.

[03:02:26] SSB 22 allow independent charter schools to operate statewide. SB 22 creates an independent authorizing board and also empowers CSA districts to, to serve as authorizers. It repeals all the caps on enrollments. Repeals the 52 50 student cap for virtual schools and the 480 student cap at the UW Parkside Charter School.

[03:02:50] Lifting the caps makes the schools a more accessible public school option for families. It will allow all authorizers to create virtual schools if they want. Not [03:03:00] every student will excel in brick and mortar schools. Virtual schools offer a greater choice in personalization. It allows charter schools flex flexibility in hiring teachers.

[03:03:10] As you said, as said earlier, they're have to have college degrees, they have to be certified. And that we are putting, um, options for the D P I if they so choose to develop rules that allow teachers to teach multiple subjects if they demonstrate competence in the subjects they teach. And that will be up to the D p i optional costs for the charter school authorizing board would come from fees from the independent governing boards of the charter school.

[03:03:36] So it's not going to cost the state anything. Okay. The why, why the authorizing board and I, I would like, I think we should talk about that because we want to deal with best practices. We wanna deal with having the expertise to judge is this organization qualified and capable of delivering a quality product?

[03:03:59] It is [03:04:00] also going to be audited. The authorizing board will be audited for results and how the money is used and how it's operated. So that is a definite change. 'cause right now there isn't an authorizing board and it's all, it's all like school boards can authorize and the, the two RS can be authorized to the city of Milwaukee and M A T C and Racine through the u, the UW Park side.

[03:04:25] But this authorizing board will have broader authority all over the state. But I wanna make sure that, you know, the reason we're doing this, and Todd can talk about this nationally, we need to have high expectations. We need to have best practices, we need to have accountability, and we need to have valuation.

[03:04:45] So that's why the authorizing board will be audited and we'll make a report to the, the legislature and we'll be able to get information as we want it and require it. So those are the basic components, and I would like to open [03:05:00] it up for discussion. And I really appreciate your having this bill up today.

[03:05:05] It's a very important topic, and I, I have to tell you, I, um, I'm so thankful that we're talking about education and I, I look forward Senator Olsson to, to working with you and your whole committee on working on, uh, strengthening all of our schools throughout our state. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Questions, we'll just go right down the line, Bob.

[03:05:27] Yeah. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I've got quite a few, but I'll ask a couple and then Sure. Defer to other committee members. There's two things that strike me about this testimony. One is, in, particularly in Dennis Antes remarks, it is focused about the acute educational challenges in the city of Milwaukee.

[03:05:48] I don't think anybody disagrees with the need to find ways in which, uh, every one of the 85,000 students are given an opportunity to fulfill their promise.

[03:06:00] And there's, uh, so I, there's no disagreement there. Where there is a real trouble, and I want you to address this, Senator Darlene, is you really don't have a clue, uh, what the needs and challenges are of the 23 school districts I represent.

[03:06:16] Number one, you don't have a clue in terms of the performance of those schools. You cannot tell me which one is a high performing or low performing. I can

answer it. There are no low performing schools other than two of them that happened to be defined as low performing because some of the students didn't participate in the test because they were special needs.

[03:06:37] And that drew down the average as it didn't reflect the real world. Uh, so this bill applies to every school district in the state. These school districts in northern Wisconsin will lose state revenue, state aid for every charter school student who is paid for, whether it be in Milwaukee or somewhere [03:07:00] else in the state.

[03:07:01] That means they have less of an ability to meet the educational needs of their children. The Constitution says the legislature shall provide by law for the establishment of district schools, which shall be as nearly uniform as practicable and such schools shall be free and without charge for tuition to all children between the ages of four and 20 years.

[03:07:23] How do you reconcile what is becoming the dismantling of public public school funding for school districts that are performing well, but they're gonna have less ability to pay for the needs of their students as a result of this legislation? Well, your, your issue as to. This is an option for your school district.

[03:07:44] You, you may or may not ever choose that in your district. This is not saying, this is not mandating charter schools. This is offering the opportunity for communities who want to use the option. So you might never get to that because you, you said [03:08:00] district board thought, excuse me. Go ahead, finish. I, I question 'cause So no, this is up to the community to decide whether they want to have charter schools.

[03:08:09] We're not mandating charter schools in your district. We're just enabling you to, to have in your communities, if communities want to have charters, they will be able to, if they go through the, um, the appropriate process of being identified as being appropriate and capable of delivering. We're not saying you have to do it.

[03:08:28] School district can establish one, can a school district, uh, not pay for the student participate. The school district is going to lose revenues. When there are other school districts that establish these charter schools, you're, you're absolute Well, they're not gonna necessarily lose money. The, actually, the equalization pie will grow because the cost of a charter school is less than a, a other, uh, a regular public school.

[03:08:55] The and, and the others can talk about that here. I, I have the figures on that. Fir [03:09:00] first of all, only 20% of all the school districts in the state have ever authorized a charter school. 85% of our charter schools are authorized by local school districts. In fact, we have the highest percentage of unionized charter schools in the United States.

[03:09:12] Even if this bill passes, the vast majority of charter schools and state will be authorized by local schools. And if they, if they authorize good local charter schools, then people will stay in their district. These independent charter schools we're talking about right now represent 1.2% of all state aid by 20,015.

[03:09:31] Even if this bill passes, they're not gonna represent more than 2.2%. So they're not gonna have uh, um, and they will save tax money because they're cheaper per student. But the fact is this bill, I believe enhances the school districts as an authorizer of charter schools. It gives them an element of reform.

[03:09:48] And I honestly believe if we don't take on the mantle of reforming the public school system publicly, we are building the argument to privatize it. Frankly, I don't think you have any respect for those public schools that don't [03:10:00] wanna participate in them. I do need to participate. Matter fact, excuse me.

[03:10:03] As a matter of fact, you demean them because they don't participate in charter schools. No. The question is this, if the Maple School district chooses not to have a charter school, but they lose a little bit of state aid is a little bit less equalization good for the children in that district? I don't know.

[03:10:17] It depends how you feel. We go back to the argument of people living, it depends how you feel about the education of children in other parts. Many of the public school districts and the state do great. They do great for 95% of the kids, but there are public school districts. That don't do great for 50% of the kids.

[03:10:32] It's not just Milwaukee. You have problems in Racine, you have problems in Madison. The education of African American kids in Madison in terms of graduation rates and in terms of other issues is just about as bad as Milwaukee. So Native American. So the issue is, the issue is we would like an option for charter schools where they're needed.

[03:10:49] Your school district, if it's doing that well, it doesn't need charter schools. What you're feeling. And you're right, you know, if it changed the financing so it

doesn't have to pay for 'em. Well, well there's a, there is a, a novel thought [03:11:00] I'd like have to pay. Excuse me. I'd like to, but look at this budget.

[03:11:03] This is all connected to this budget. By the way. We're ranked seventh in the country in the number of charter schools. That doesn't tell me that we're ranked seventh. When we were ranked seventh, that was a high number for taxes. We're ranked seventh. That tells me that we've got a high percentage of, of charter schools compared to other states in the nation.

[03:11:20] That's not a bad thing. And you're talking as though it's a disaster. We've got a high population of Native American students are in the Ashland School District whose budget is being clobbered, whose rev who have to cut 5% of their spending and they're gonna lose additional revenue. And you're saying this is an equal educational opportunity for that school district.

[03:11:38] But, but what you're saying in turn, and not for your school district, because you've already admitted that it's very high performing. But if I'm a parent in a school district that isn't high performing, you're saying that my child should be forced to go to that school even if I don't feel it's gonna properly educate my kid.

[03:11:54] So that that school district doesn't lose money. No, I don't think there should be on one more, one more, one [03:12:00] more question. 'cause here's the question, Mr. Chair. It is. What about that? Let's say there's the 7,000 students, Dennis, that, that now participated in charter schools, and I won't, I won't argue that they're, those 7,000 aren't, might have a better chance to get that individual education.

[03:12:18] What are you saying about the 82,000 kids who remain? All 82,000 of those kids should have an equal opportunity or a full education, whether it's through a charter school or through a public school district. And by the way, N P S S has more charter schools combined than all of the independent charter schools in the city that are part of N P s, including the special needs kids who can barely speak.

[03:12:42] We have schools, yes. Yeah. For example, wings Academy, which is an n p s non high school, is 75% autistic and A D H D kids. Every one of these independent schools in Milwaukee that, uh, Dennis is talking about have very high free and reduced lunch. And, and most of them, like Milwaukee College Prep, are educating [03:13:00] almost a hundred percent African American children.

[03:13:01] Or in the case of Bruce Guadalupe, almost 80% Hispanic kids. And where do you suggest that this charter school in South Shore of Lake Superior is gonna be located? When the nearest, when, when Superior is 45 miles, 55 miles away, Washburn is 45 miles away. Where do you wanna locate this school for rural communities like that?

[03:13:21] Well, that's one of the reasons that we wanted the cease to do it because rural communities are really suffering. In fact, they have a higher percentage off of an as of at-risk kids than urban areas. And their school districts are too small to provide diverse programming. So one issue in this bill is the ability for several rural districts to, to co-sponsor schools together to offer it may be part of the program has to be virtual, be blended learning, but to offer more diverse programs.

[03:13:47] We're trying to build the, I mean, I agree with everything you've said, particularly the idea that we need a village, but we need a village with diverse approaches to meet multiple needs, not with a monolithic approach, but that diverse approach [03:14:00] can't be dismantling public education. Absolutely not. Should not.

[03:14:03] But it is, if you look at this budget, sir, you cannot deny the fact that this budget destroys public education in the way in which it reduces state aid, which dis equalizes to communities like Ashland and Superior and most of the poor communities in this state where it dis equalizes educational opportunity by requiring school districts that spend less than the statewide average to have to cut valuable programs, disadvantaging the students who go to the school.

[03:14:30] That's the real world we're dealing with. At the same time, you're coming in here and saying, offer an opportunity for those children who are lucky enough to have their parents do something for them. What about those kids that don't have parents who care about 'em? Okay. All the issues that you just raised legitimate as they are, are not part of the charter school issue.

[03:14:46] That money is not due to charter schools. The issue I have to an, these are tough questions and the question is if, if, if to, to keep the entire, to keep the school system whole as you want it, what would you do with the [03:15:00] thousands of kids going to charter schools? Would you say, you know, I I you have no choice.

[03:15:04] You go back to nm p Ss, whether you want to or not printed al this isn't a dialogue, by the way. I'm one of the authors of the original charter school bill. I'm

not against charter school education. I understand. I happen to think that the governor's proposals have some merit in his budget on charter school.

[03:15:19] This goes too far, does great damage and can have harmful consequences on children who are still in that public school system who aren't in charter school. So if I believe that, that I, I I, I disagree with you and if I believed what you said was, was what was gonna happen, then I wouldn't be here supporting the bill.

[03:15:36] Senator Vain hold. Thank you Chairman Olson. I have some questions for Mr. C Barton. Um, you mentioned something about, um, this is for his holding hearings, the increase in charter schools nationwide. And I wrote down that you had 400 new schools, 150,000 new students and 400,000 nationally. Is that an annual [03:16:00] figure?

[03:16:04] About 400 new schools open up across the country. Mm-hmm. And about 150,000. New students enroll in charter schools, the 400,000 number. Mm-hmm. Was the number of students on waiting list to get into a charter school? Nationally? Nationally. Have, have you or, or anyone that you know of in Wisconsin done any studies on what might be the projected demand here in Wisconsin?

[03:16:28] Uh, we have not. John I think has probably, we submitted, might speak into your microphone. Um, we did an analysis of what we think the results of this bill would be in terms of an increase in the two R schools and an increase in, in instrumentality or district schools. Whether the bill passes or not, there will be a significant increase in charter schools that are instrumentalities because of the federal funds that D p I has.

[03:16:51] So there were 40 planning grants given out last year, which means there'll be more schools. Uh, if the bill passes. We estimate again that between now and [03:17:00] 2015, in terms of the independent charter schools, there'll be a, a, a growth from them representing 1.2% of state aid to 2.2% of state eight. Can you give me the actual numbers of students in schools?

[03:17:11] Yeah, I, I have a chart. I can send it to you that we sent to, uh, um, Senator Olson's office. Uh, you know, that's our best estimate. 1.2% to 2.2 0.20 between now and 2015. Now that's, that's our best estimate. And it could be wrong. Just to, uh, follow up on that, if I might, just looking at the experiences of other states that have created similar kinds of independent statewide charter boards.

[03:17:35] I think the concern in those states when they did that was these entities would become rubber stamps for every charter application that came along. And in fact, we've seen just the opposite that these boards often are the, uh, toughest approvers of charter schools in terms of having the lowest number, the lowest percentage of applications that they actually approve.

[03:17:55] And so we haven't seen, you know, charters go from zero to a hundred [03:18:00] in one year. It's actually been pretty small and steady growth because I think these boards recognize that, uh, the long-term sustainability or viability of a charter school movement in a state is directly connected to the quality of the schools that are created, and it doesn't benefit anyone to approve a bunch of charter schools just for the sake of having more charters.

[03:18:18] Mm-hmm. Are you familiar with education management organizations or charter management organizations? And do you know what the percent of charter schools nationwide are controlled, are governed by these agencies? Yeah. These type of entities? Yep. Each, each of the 5,000 plus charter schools across the country is a, has a non-profit governing board.

[03:18:37] Um, in about 80% of those 5,000 schools we call mom and pop are independent charters. And that's really a group of parents and teachers and a community who get together and start a charter school. That's 80% of the 5,000, uh, about 10% then of the 5,000, uh, whereas is where a nonprofit governing board contracts with a for-profit management organization [03:19:00] like Edison Learning, uh, is one example.

[03:19:02] Um, and then ano, the last 10% of those 5,000 are nonprofit governing boards that contract with a nonprofit organization like the Knowledges Power Program are kipp that's probably the most notable one nationally to operate the school. So all of the schools are nonprofit in of those 5010% contract with for-profit.

[03:19:22] And that 10% and, and 10% profit and 10% non-profit is, is that, is that also true with regard to virtual charter schools? Um, I do not have the numbers for virtual charter schools, uh, broken down like that. Um, but we can, we can find that data for you nationally. Okay. We've heard here that, um, charter schools are public schools, and I had some questions about assets.

[03:19:47] Um, when you look at a public school, the public school is governed by a local elected board. And I'm wondering, in a charter school who maintains ownership of the physical assets of the charter [03:20:00] school, the buildings, the

land, if that's public property is, are, are, is if the schools are public, is that also public property and one unit of local government retains ownership?

[03:20:11] If there's a statewide board that authorizes the charter school. Different states have addressed that in different ways. I think in, in the cases, just on where the districts are authorizers, those buildings remain in district hands in most cases. Um, when in some of the other states where there, there have been state charter boards, they have authorized schools.

[03:20:32] The nonprofit, uh, governing board, uh, sometimes owns the building. Uh, in some cases, the nonprofit governing board leases the building from somebody else. Uh, in some cases they're actually leasing the building from the school district. So it really varies from place to place. Is that addressed in this bill?

[03:20:50] Is that issue of ownership addressed in this bill? It is, uh, is not addressed in this bill. Okay. I, I wanna ask a couple [03:21:00] questions about the board. And I'm, I'm trying to get an idea of how the board operates with, in, in the same, um, world as our constitutional officer who is the superintendent of schools of public schools, and also the elected board, um, the elected school board.

[03:21:19] And, um, if you, if you could just help me understand how you said that the local unit of government, or I think it was John, said that the local unit of government could decide whether or not there's a charter school. But as I read the bill, uh, even if the Alma School district, my home school district where my husband serves on the school board, even if that school district had decided that they didn't want a charter school, the board could then authorize a charter school that could put up a building right next to my little alma school district or school, the Alma area schools, even if my local people and the [03:22:00] elected officials didn't want that charter school.

[03:22:02] Is there any recourse for the community to say, wait, we elected the school board, we don't want this, we want it to go away. What, what would happen? Uh, that's a good question. And the way the bill is drafted currently, if, if, if, uh, a group of parents and teachers in your community wanted to start a charter school, they would have the option to still go to the local school district, uh, which is currently in law.

[03:22:24] They could go to the CSA that represents that district, or they could apply to the state charter board. They would have that option. And what we've seen in

other states is when a state charter board, and so the, and so the state charter, if they went to the CSA or the state Charter Board, they could approve that school.

[03:22:40] And what we've seen in other places is when non-local school district authorizers set up their processes, they usually, uh, include in the process the ability for the local school board or the superintendent or whoever in the community, uh, besides them, has a voice in that process, along with the parents and teachers who wanna [03:23:00] start that charter school in that community.

[03:23:02] But that's not spelled out in the bill. That process is not spelled out in the bill. Correct. Okay. Um, another question about the bill, about the board. Are there, um, conflict of interest provisions that exist for the members of the board? We know that there are nonprofit entities that act to do this. You mentioned Edison learning.

[03:23:21] What if we had a person who had ties to Edison learning who was on the board? Is there, I mean, usually when we set up state law like this, there are pretty strict conflict of interest provisions. Is that I didn't find that in the bill. It, it is not in there. And I, I would agree that that should be, I, that's one thing we wanted to address.

[03:23:41] In, in some ca in, as I mentioned in some states, when they've set these up, they've gone into great detail in the legislation outlining some of these things. Whether it's the process that the board will use to approve applications or the conflict of interest items. Other states have left it up to that board when they start to create those kinds of things.

[03:23:59] And so, [03:24:00] um, so in this case, uh, the law is silent on the conflict of interest. What, what about the criteria by which the, the board reviews whether or not the charter is renewed? In other words, who renews it under what criteria and how do we eliminate those schools that as, as everybody mentioned, there's uneven data on charter schools and there's problems with low quality.

[03:24:24] And I think I hear you saying that the board will help assure that quality. Um, how do we do that? How does the board do that? Let me address that because that's absolutely critical. 'cause charter schools don't work unless they're in balance between autonomy and accountability. And every charter school authorizer needs to close poor performing charter schools.

[03:24:43] And they need to have a mechanism to do that, including the local school districts. And so every charter school has a contract. And in that contract, it is

required that charter schools spell out very specific performance criteria, not just how well they'll do on W K C E tests, but how well they'll do with local [03:25:00] measures like value added map testing, even issues about, uh, qualitative things in the school.

[03:25:06] And the authorizer, whether it's the local school district or the state board every year has to evaluate that school. And when its contract comes up to term, it needs to make a full evaluation of whether that school should be closed or whether it's contract should be renewed. And one of the reasons we've tried to focus on a very small set of authorizers is to make sure that we continue to have very high accountability for closing, for performing charter schools.

[03:25:32] And if I could add to that, um, one of the things in the bill is that it requires all charter authorizers in the state to adhere to the principles and standards of quality authorizing put forward by the National Association of Charter School authorizers. Um, some states, as it have actually detailed those things in the, in their legislation in one big chunk of it has to do with renewal, uh, decision making.

[03:25:55] Um, and I know there's another presenter from that group who can go into more detail about [03:26:00] how those principles and standards address the issue of renewal and non-renewal, as well as some other things. Thank you. Just one last question about quality. Um, I know there's some un un uneven results on, on quality among charter schools, and I imagine that the, this may be in some of the standards that you're talking about, but I certainly didn't read about in the bill.

[03:26:22] When you, when you look at quality in charter schools, what do we know about both student performance and teacher performance and, and is there, is there someplace that you can send me in order to read more about what we know about this and what makes equality school and what evaluations have been done and sort of some of the management issues that are related.

[03:26:45] You talk about, um, can you kinda gimme some direction on how to learn more about that? Yes. Uh, we can provide, uh, you some resources. One about the, the vast array of research that out that's out there, which I do think, uh, to be [03:27:00] candid shows the, the mixed results. But what we draw from it is that it's the importance of each state's law is critical.

[03:27:07] And you can see the states that have created the best laws have the strongest performing charter sectors. And I mentioned a few of them earlier. Um, but there are some other states, uh, like in Ohio that has not created a strong

environment. And you'll see some struggles in the environment there. But there's also been some good studies about individual charter schools and how they've used their autonomy, flexibility, and accountability in certain areas, uh, to achieve really high results.

[03:27:33] And so we're happy to share that with you as well. Okay. Thank you. Great. Can I just add that with the Obama administration, uh, putting federal money into the expansion of charter schools and with Secretary Duncan being a big believer in charter schools, we're going to see a lot of discussion on best practices and a lot of discussion on, on teacher evaluation and performance.

[03:27:56] 'cause that is a part of the race to the top. And that's one reason Wisconsin [03:28:00] did not get federal dollars to the, for the race to the top is because I think, uh, uh, Senator Luther Olsson is going to be dealing with some of those suggestions about how we can put more teeth into our evaluation, not only of student outcomes, but, uh, professional teaching and, and, and how those outcomes are, um, how we invest in teacher performance and how we evaluate it.

[03:28:25] But that's really important. I think we'll get that's one partnership we that we'll be. Interesting at the federal level because, uh, secretary Duncan is a, used the, the charter school as one of his main component to help turn around the Chicago public school system. And as a result, a lot of young people used to go to Chicago, the city of Chicago, stay there for a part of their career.

[03:28:50] But when they ended up having families and, and when the public schools were really important to them, um, then they are staying in Chicago because, [03:29:00] uh, secretary Duncan demonstrated with his reforms that, that you can improve the quality of public education in tough urban areas. And so you're gonna see a lot more emphasis on that in the federal government through the Obama administration and Secretary Duncan.

[03:29:16] Okay. Thank you. I I, I do just wanna mention again that I would really appreciate the numbers, if you could gimme the numbers. We have a website I can send you that shows the performance of every charter school in the state over the last several years and where it ranks, uh, to states. Okay. But, but I mean in terms of the increased demand that you see between now in 2015.

[03:29:36] Thank you Chairman Olson. I wonder if I can just indulge you for a moment and I could respond to Senator, uh, I, I feel compelled to say this. Senator Jock. I've been working with charter schools for the last, uh, three years.

Prior to that, I've spent 40 years working for m p s on public policy, on [03:30:00] legislation with you and with many people in this room.

[03:30:03] By and large, my initiatives have failed. The Milwaukee public School system is in dire straits. Our purpose as the advocates is not to dismantle the Milwaukee public school system, but to remove the vast number of poor performing students from poor performing schools inside of M P Ss and give them the opportunity to attend quality charter schools, not to dismantle the system.

[03:30:34] Indeed, I am prepared to use my energy and my skill, whatever it may be, to spend as much time working on the quality of education for m p s schools. As I am charter schools, my only objective, the only objective I have, is to give these tens of thousands of poorly performing, performing M P Ss students, the opportunity to get a [03:31:00] better education, how whatever system is available to them, we must make those quality options part of an educational reform movement in the city of Milwaukee.

[03:31:10] Senator Larsson, thank you. Um, I've got a lot of questions on this, um, just 'cause I'm trying to wrap my arms around exactly what it does. Um, the biggest question I have is right now we've got 98% of charter schools that are approved by school boards. Um, Why don't we want our local school boards to be the ones chartering?

[03:31:33] Why do we want it to be coming from someone outside of our community? Well, first of all, we do want local school boards to charter where it's appropriate. The problem is because they're the only authorized outside of the city of Milwaukee, there is a tendency for them to keep reregulating the charter schools and taking away their autonomy.

[03:31:52] The purpose of charter schools is to innovate and that innovation has to be separated and that autonomy is necessary for the school to prove itself out.

[03:32:00] We believe by offering a very limited amount of alternative authorizers, it will improve the school districts as authorizers. 'cause they will authorize more autonomous charter schools in order to keep the kids in those districts.

[03:32:13] Because we have charter schools all over the state that complain to me constantly, that their autonomy is constantly being challenged. In fact, you can ask d p i if they give federal funds to our charter schools, and the federal government has made an issue out of this for years, that our charter schools are not real charter

schools because they're not given the autonomy they're supposed to be given, although they have the accountability they're supposed to have.

[03:32:35] So this is trying to improve all authorizers, including the districts. So you're saying autonomy, but I mean, don't you mean accountability that these, these, these schools have to be accountable to the school board within their community And because they don't, they don't like what they're saying to 'em, they want to go to, you know, someone else for the answer.

[03:32:52] No, no. Accountability and autonomy are two sides of, of, of a balanced, uh, waiting system. That [03:33:00] accountability of the school board is an authorizer to evaluate the school and close it if it doesn't perform, is what we mean by accountability. Autonomy means they have control over their curriculum. They have control over their finances, they have control over the people that teach in the school.

[03:33:13] They have control over the, the innovation. Each charter school is meant to be distinctive. It's supposed to be something that innovates. It's supposed to be something that's meeting the special needs of kids who otherwise wouldn't have their needs fully met by the district. And it's unrealistic to ask any organization, no matter how good the school district is, even Senator J's district to meet a hundred percent of the needs.

[03:33:35] No organization meets a hundred percent of the needs with its mainstream product. Charter schools are not meant to replace school districts. They're supposed to be able to meet the needs of those kids in the district who otherwise don't have their kid needs met. If those districts authorize effective charter schools, there would be very few independent charters.

[03:33:53] Cool. And that's, that changed in the spill Larsson, the school districts can still charter [03:34:00] instrumentalities through their school board. Right. But the issue is that this is giving great favoritism to those schools that are not, um, where it's basically giving, uh, one up to those, um, in the fact that, I mean, the rest we, we keep on talking about how we value education.

[03:34:15] We value kids. Well, we just kicked him in the gut when w Walker introduced his budget where he cut funding by \$748 million. And this is something where now we're giving him a tool to say, well, here's your life raft. Take it or leave it. And this is the only way that those schools that, that any student can end up getting a, a good education.

[03:34:32] So if we're gonna value education, if we're gonna pretend that we value education, then I'd like to hear that we're gonna be rejecting the \$748 million in cuts to public education. Unless, unless you think that our, um, these charter schools will benefit more by getting less funding. I'd like to hear that argument.

[03:34:47] No. If you think that if we fund them less still succeed. No, I think you're exact point. You're correct. 85% of the schools, 90 are schools in local school districts. And those charter schools receive the same amount of [03:35:00] funding as the, uh, traditional public schools. The only ones that receive less funding are these independent charter schools.

[03:35:07] And, and there are arguments that they receive less funding 'cause they don't have the overhead a district has and an overhead rightfully has to carry overhead. We're not arguing that charter schools should replace school districts. We're arguing that we can have an ecosystem of diverse schools that are all public.

[03:35:24] They're in the commons, they're publicly funded, and they're held accountable by public bodies. That's all we're saying. We want to make the public school districts better. We'd like every school district in the state to be as good as Senator Jou district, including Milwaukee. Okay. I mean, that, that, that's, that's fine.

[03:35:41] But that, that's not what this bill does. This bill ends up taking away the autonomy of those school boards because it gives a, a great benefit to those that are not under it. I mean, that's, that's fine. We can talk in platitudes and, and feel fantastic about it, but that's not what this bill does. This gives that a, it gives more, uh, power to those that are further [03:36:00] away from the community.

[03:36:01] It gives power to, uh, a board that's appointed by, I believe the governor and the Fitzgerald's. No, the board is appointed by the head of the assembly, the head of the Senate and the governor. And those offices change. Those offices will not always be in the hands of the people that they're currently in the hands of.

[03:36:20] So the other thing is the bill requires that mm-hmm. Of each three appointments that are made, one has to come from the other party, uh, whether we like whoever is currently holding office. We just heard the argument all day today that local officials in Milwaukee should be able to make decisions 'cause they got elected and now we're arguing because people got elected that we don't like.

[03:36:41] They shouldn't be able to make decisions. The point is that these are public officials. Okay. And they are making a public decision. This bill does not deter

local school. I, I met with your office. The, the staff person I met with, it came from a charter school in Racine. It's run by a school district [03:37:00] instead.

[03:37:00] It's the best school he is ever gone to. The fact is this doesn't deter any school district from chartering schools. I believe it improves their ability to charter schools. You're you're okay. You're, you're blurring the line. I am. You're where we're talking about school dis Chris. Yeah. We don't really, really want to have a debate here.

[03:37:19] Let's just ask some questions. Okay, sure. 'cause there's a lot of people that want to, yeah. Okay. I have a question. What's the prevention of making sure that these schools don't get turned over to for-profit, uh, corporations and for-profit businesses? Because I see that there's a provision in here where there's no direct ability to do that, but you can charter with a group that, that, that can then switch it over to, uh, a group that does.

[03:37:40] So you can throw an arms distance away. This bill requires that all charter schools have a governing board that's a nonprofit organization that holds the charter. So in order to proliferate a profit making company to run a bunch of schools in the state, they would have to go to each individual charter school throughout the state and convince that different governing board to hire them over anybody else.

[03:38:00]

[03:38:00] And currently we do have for-profit schools, and not all of them are chartered vir. Uh, somebody asked about virtual schools. A number of the virtual schools are for-profit. So I, I think the bill is trying to protect, uh, the, the non-profit and public status of charters. I don't see it proliferating for-profit companies running schools, but there's no prevention from doing that.

[03:38:21] The prevention is what I consider a very difficult hurdle of trying to convince a lot of diverse non-profit local boards that they should hire that one entity as a profit entity to run schools. I don't think that's gonna happen. And Senator Larsson, we are very open to the authorizing board composition.

[03:38:39] I think, uh, Todd, you'd be very willing to sit down with, uh, Senator Larsson and, and us anybody who wants to be a part of that, because when we, you must have other models from other states, we'd be glad to talk to you about if you have other thoughts. But what we're trying to do if, with having an authorizing board is to have standards, to have accountability and to have [03:39:00] best practices and have someone evaluate that.

[03:39:02] And then the, the audit bureau will hold, um, an audit. And I think it's annually, isn't it? So that what, you know, what, what the contracts say is what they're doing and what the board is accountable for. They are accountable and what the public dollars are invested in, that it's invested correctly. And that's our audit bureau.

[03:39:23] So we'd be happy to work with you if you don't like the composition. And maybe we could work with Todd and find some other options. That would be good. Thank you. Okay. I have one other question. Okay. And that is, if you have, if anyone here has statistics on the, um, students with disabilities that are in charter schools, but those charter schools specifically that are not chartered by school boards.

[03:39:43] Oh yeah. Okay. I will get those and send them to your office. Okay. You want the, uh, special ed numbers in the independent charter schools? I'd like special ed and people and students with disabilities in charters that are not chartered by local school boards. Yes. 'cause I've heard some pretty, yeah. [03:40:00] Pretty bad horror stories.

[03:40:01] Okay, well, I'll send you the numbers. They'll be what they are. Senator Dilk, did you have another question? Yeah, I do. Yeah. Make sure those numbers include not just those who are classified as A D H D, but those who might be physically restrained. Yes. Wheelchair bound, unable to speak. Yep. Let's make sure we have, let's make sure we have those numbers too.

[03:40:22] Absolutely. Absolutely. Because those are, those are the real costs, uh, extraordinary challenges in many public schools where 25% to 30% of their students are in that. That's precisely why we asked for this bill to include the provision of a random enrollment process in charter schools, which previously did not exist in law.

[03:40:45] I'm sorry. Most of the parents with these children are not looking for a charter school. They're very happy to have the conditions their kids are in, so don't suggest that they're gonna send them to a charter school for crying out loud. But something that, by the way, Dennis, I I Why would they not? I [03:41:00] appreciate, Dennis, I really appreciated, uh, I appreciated your remarks and, and I didn't mean, imply that you wanted to dismantle public education in Milwaukee.

[03:41:07] I think every bone in your body, every nerve is designed to try to improve educational opportunities. You wanna do it statewide. This governor's budget is

dismantling public education in the state of Wisconsin, and we cannot have a conversation about charter schools and ignore the conversation in the budget.

[03:41:24] Now, one of the things you, you said, Dennis, is you, you, you said, we need to provide opportunities for poorly performing students to have an opportunity to succeed. And frankly, most of the dialogue up to this point has been about poorly performing schools. I'm not convinced that many of these students who are going to charter or choice are poorly performing students at all.

[03:41:51] I think they're good students and as a matter of fact, when they move from a public school into charter or choice, what it does is it [03:42:00] reduces those test scores a little bit in that public school and it might improve them over here. So you didn't mean to imply that these kids somehow are not performing well, it just gives them an environment that may be more.

[03:42:15] Meet their, their particular needs. I wish I had stated the issue just the way you stated it. Senator Jock. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Um, that's very thoughtful for you, isn't it? Can I just jump in on this one real quick in terms, 'cause it's a question we, we get a lot in terms of, are the students enrolling in charter schools, uh, higher performing than the students that are staying in traditional public schools?

[03:42:38] And actually, the research shows just the opposite, that the kids, and to me, this is a common sense thing. If you're a parent of children and your kids are struggling in a traditional public school for whatever reason, you're looking for options. If your kids are doing great, you have no reason to move anywhere.

[03:42:51] And I think the research shows bears that out, that a higher percentage of kids who enroll in charter schools are behind academically than the kids who [03:43:00] stay in the traditional public schools. Here's my final point. You can respond to it if you'd like, but the school districts in northern Wisconsin that do an extraordinary job, and they have students who don't.

[03:43:11] I flunk the seventh grade. It wasn't my teacher's fault that I flunk the seventh grade. It was my fault. And you, you, you, I just liked the seventh grade. I think that's what it was. Just liked the teacher. That's all Bob.

[03:43:26] Uh, I got a B once and I felt really good about it until I found out it stood for better. Um, but the, the, the, the, the school districts, not just in northern Wisconsin, are going to have less of a capability of meeting the needs of their

students as a result of this budget. And you have not incorporated that into your remarks.

[03:43:47] And it gives the impression that you want a bifurcated system in this state, a system with this one board that says, this is for schools where kids can do better. And then this is for the rest of 'em. And [03:44:00] that is not good for Wisconsin. And I don't think that's at all what Dennis Conta has been saying, but that's what I'm hearing you say.

[03:44:06] And it scares the hell out of me. Well, that's Glen, did you have a question? No, I, I think you need to clarify what you said and what your intent is because that's important. I think, I think No, I agree with what he said. I, I, what we want is a system that meets all the needs of kids, and we want it to be public and we don't want it to be bifurcated.

[03:44:23] We want it to be coordinated and collaborative. I, I agree with you. You, sta again, you stated it very well. Senator Grossman. Yeah.

[03:44:33] Yeah. I have a few questions for you. Um, first of all, I, I think you point out, uh, I appreciate where you're trying to go and, and I do think that all children should have a right to a good school. I want to point out that an argument have made, but, um, not only do you want a good school as far as good reading scores, but recently, I, I've been informed there's some schools around the state through the [03:45:00] unprofessionalism of the staff or whatever, in which students are knowing very clearly where their teachers stand on a high political issue right now.

[03:45:08] Well, Glenn that on Glenn, that doesn't have anything to do with this. Glen read that.

[03:45:16] Okay. So,

[03:45:21] okay. Um, I, I've got a question for you. When I read the fiscal bureau paper here, they point out that, uh, there will be 70, about \$7,500 per year, um, spent on a charter school kid of taxpayer money. And they point out that that's a savings. Uh, if that child moves from public school to charter school and they point out that's an additional cost if the child moves from something else.

[03:45:51] In other words, they're anticipating under the fiscal bureau paper here that some students move from private schools to charter schools. [03:46:00] They recently tried to get a charter school in West Bend where I'm from, and I think

eventually it was shot down by concerns that those kids are gonna come from the private schools and the already hurt private schools.

[03:46:13] We further hurt by charters. Now private schools in my district are spending on an elementary level, uh, 2,500 to \$3,400 a year. And here you're anticipating setting up a charter school, uh, for about 7,500 bucks a year. Uh, I'll, I'll ask whether it concerns you because you're involved with statewide charters, including maybe West Bend, if you feel there's a concern that you are gonna inadvertently be devastating the parochial schools, and after you respond, I'll ask the national guy here, nationwide, when you have a great expansion of charter schools, does that harm the private schools?

[03:46:53] And finally, if it does, what do you expect us to do in this legislature to make sure it doesn't hurt them? So I, I'll give you those two questions. Well, I [03:47:00] do know that it, it is, um, that people consider that it does hurt private schools. 'cause Matt COSO is a friend of mine, and he's made that very clear to me from his association that he feels that charter schools will, uh, take kids out of private schools.

[03:47:13] And, uh, that's an unintended consequence. The con, the intended consequence of the bill is to improve the public education system, um, in, in my limited time left on Earth. That's the only issue I care about. I, I'm a product to private schools. I don't have a solution to your question, but I'm sure there are people like Matt that will find a solution.

[03:47:32] Okay. Well, well, the question I have is in West Bend, when, when they brought this thing forth, different people had different guesses as to the number of kids. If they opened up a, a, a charter school, the number of kids who'd be coming from the local private schools. And we have a very strong private school system where I'm from 30%, 50%, whatever.

[03:47:51] When you look at statewide, if they'd put a charter in Fond Dulac or Oshkosh or wherever, do you guess percentage wise, how many of those kids are coming from private schools? [03:48:00] No, I can't, but clearly some do. There's no doubt that some do. Most are coming from the same public school district that created the charter school as an alternative for those kids.

[03:48:09] But yes, some percentages come in and I don't have. Maybe we need to do a study on that. I, I think it'd be a good thing you can think about what you wanna do now nationwide as charter schools expand. I, I don't have a problem with expanding

charter schools. I just wanna make sure that one more time, we, we just devastate the private schools, but what happens nationwide when this thing happens?

[03:48:31] I think, uh, we heard similar concerns that John raised, uh, but our position has always been no school, whether it's traditional public, public charter, or private, has the lock on a parent. And, uh, parents need should be able to have all options and be able to move freely between them. And so the complaints we hear from some private school operators, um, that charters do hurt them.

[03:48:54] I mean, I think it's, it, it's probably true. Charters are coming in and parents who may not be able to afford a private [03:49:00] option, uh, are now able to go into the public system through the charter route. And we think that's a good thing. Okay. Well, I just a, a follow up for you. Again, you're, you're saying it costs, or you should be able to cost 7,500 bucks a year to send a kid to a charter school.

[03:49:14] Now, now usually these privates are running it between, when I talk to my local people, 2,500 to 3,400 a year for elementary school, more expensive for high school, elementary school, total cost 2,500 to 3,400 a year. Uh, do you think that if, if we're going to be throwing 7,500 a year to charter, we ought to be putting something into these privates?

[03:49:36] We, we don't have a position on that one way or the other. We're focused on, uh, our, our title is the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, and we're focused on how can we improve the public education system through creating more public charter schools. Okay. Well, maybe I'll ask Mr. Kana, we're, we're giving the private schools in m p s 6,500 bucks a year.

[03:49:55] How much do you think we should give the private schools outstate if we're gonna give them, you know, um, center [03:50:00] growth mode? We're focused on charter schools and we'll, we'll be glad to talk with you another time, but we're not gonna solve all the problems of the whole public education system here today.

[03:50:08] What we are trying to do is offer an option to strengthen Wisconsin's charter school legislation so that we can offer communities, parents and children, especially opportunities to meet their needs at different, at different levels, in different ways, and have accountability and the best use of the tax dollars behavior.

[03:50:28] Okay. Thank you. Okay. Any other questions? If not, thank you very much for testifying, Sarah. Thank you. Thank you.

[03:50:41] Okay, so first up we have Mike Thompson and Bob Soldner from the Department of Public Instruction speaking against. And then following that, we'll have Dan Rad and David Hanson, and then Sandy [03:51:00] Whistler, and then Jill Gaskell.

[03:51:10] Nope. Okay, good. Thank you, chair person, Olsson, and committee for the ability to testify in front of you today. I'm Mike Thompson, the Deputy State superintendent, and with me today is Bob Swer. He's our Director of School MA Management Services on behalf of state SUP superintendent Tony Evers. I'm here to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 22.

[03:51:30] Due to the concerns about the impact on local school district and the public school system in Wisconsin, the department supports high quality charter schools. D P I has solid experience in supporting and expanding charter schools throughout Wisconsin. Since 2005, D P I has been awarded over \$138 million in federal funds to distribute to charter schools.

[03:51:50] Wisconsin has over 200 charter schools, which is seventh highest in the nation. As you can see from the maps we've distributed, charter schools are located all across the state. [03:52:00] All charter schools outside the Milwaukee Racine area are authorized by local school boards. According to our most recent survey, data school boards have approved 98% of the charter charter proposals statewide that have been presented to him.

[03:52:14] To them. Most all of our charter schools are authorized by locally elected school boards. We have not had the financial scandals of fraud in our charter schools like some other states have had. Coupled with a strong academic accountability to local taxpayers, our current system serves students, parents, and taxpayers.

[03:52:32] Well, one of the department's chief concerns is that this bill is a blank check made out to independent charter schools by local school districts. There are only three some sufficient appropriations in K through 12 education. One is for national board certified teachers, another is for private school choice, and a third is for independent charters.

[03:52:50] School districts are already bracing for a reduction of \$700 million in equalization aids and a \$90 million reduction in categorical aids. This bill would further reduce those [03:53:00] aids by removing the cap on aid deduction from

school districts, districts for independent charter schools. You can see the effect of this.

[03:53:07] If you look at the maps and data that we have distributed to the committee members using the governor's projected student enrollments, this bill would reduce projected equalization aid by an additional \$12.7 million in fiscal year 2013 to a total of \$70 million. The inequities in our current school funding system will be exasperated by SB 22.

[03:53:29] Equalization aid steers money to less property wealth districts using property value as a measure of wealth. Thus, property poor school district in the state who generally receive more aid will be the ones who will be disproportionately paying for independent charter schools regardless of where they're located.

[03:53:45] This is a rural, suburban, and urban issue. Under this bill currently enrolled, students who leave the district to enroll in independent charter school are no longer counted by that district as enrolled. This affects both revenue limits and equalization [03:54:00] aids revenue limits or how much a district can spend are based on student enrollment, and under this scenario, those would be reduced.

[03:54:07] Additionally, fewer students enrolled in a school district would make a district look wealthier under the school aid formula, as there'd be more property value behind each student. For individual districts, this would push a district's general equalization aid per student to a lower amount resulting in an increase in property taxes to make up the difference.

[03:54:24] Consequently, school districts would be required to make a decision as whether they can afford to raise their taxes to make up for this lost aid or cut instructional programs or services. Some districts will simply make up the cuts to deal with the lost revenue limit authority. These decisions will be forced on elected school boards across the state by actions by an unelected charter school authorizing board created under this bill.

[03:54:47] As a result, local taxpayers will have no electoral recourse to address increases in property taxes from independent charters. The charter school authorizing board raises several additional questions. Notably, [03:55:00] there are constitutional questions the bill raises that the department would like clarification on as it relates to the authority of the executive director of the board vis-a-vis the authority of the state superintendent, given the language and the bill stating the

executive executive director shall exercise such further powers, functions and duties as the board describes.

[03:55:21] Additionally, there are important policy questions regarding the merit of allowing charter school authorizers to create multiple charters under one contract. It allows multiple schools to be established across the state with relative speed and could give rise to cookie cutter charter schools rather than the unique, innovative models of which the charter movement was built.

[03:55:41] There are serious questions regarding the size, scope, and impact of what could easily become what is essentially independent and separate public school system unaccountable to local voters and communities. There's also real questions as to the ability of school boards to compete as authorizers with the charter school [03:56:00] authorizing board districts will be constrained by revenue limits and their ability to spend money needed to create new charter schools, corporations, and others seeking to establish independent charter schools will have no such restrictions.

[03:56:13] Furthermore, there should be a discussion as to whether it is appropriate to fund the administrative staff of the start charter school authorizing board by requiring schools to pay a percentage of the money provided for student education. This is, this is precedent setting that a public school in Wisconsin would be required to reduce the state funds available to educate its students in order to pay a fee to its authorizer.

[03:56:36] The fees would pay for the administrative staff salaries of the new charter school authorizing bureaucracy. It also starts a scenario where the school authorizing board is monetarily motivated to authorize more schools. Also of considerable worry are the provisions in SB 22 related to liability. SB 22 provides that a charter school authorizer will be immune from civil or criminal prosecution for any activities of a [03:57:00] charter school it has created.

[03:57:01] There is no, there is no legitimate reason that a department can discern to provide such immunity from civil or criminal prosecution. It is clearly not in the best interest of children and their families. There are two other issues with the community, with the committee should be aware. The first is that there will be an impact on schools due to, due to potential changes in virtual charters.

[03:57:22] The bill removes the requirement that virtual charter schools are authorized by school boards. If a virtual charter school is authorized as an

independent charter. Instead, they can enroll students year round. All students in the states would be considered residents, and those individuals would no longer be counted for revenue limit purposes by their resident districts as they now are under open enrollment.

[03:57:43] The second is that this bill will affect private schools as well as public schools in regards to federal dollars. Charter schools serving low income children are entitled to federal Title one funds. As the number of independent charters expand, it will divert Title one resources from existing school districts [03:58:00] and their ability to prioritize Title one funding to school buildings.

[03:58:04] In addition, charter schools receiving Title one funds are not subject to the Title one requirements that public school districts are to provide equitable service to private school children. In essence, fewer Title \$1 for public school districts will mean fewer Title \$1 for private schools. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this bill and explain some of the fiscal consequences on our local schools and the lessening of our democratic principals.

[03:58:27] If it is enacted, I'd be happy to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you. In case anybody wants to know, this is D p I, so we give them the opportunity to go a little longer just because we think it's important that they do. Uh, Senator Behold, thank you, chairman Olsson, I, you, you went through a lot of material really fast and we just got a lot of this material, so I, I'm gonna hopefully clarify some of it to, and if I'm redundant, I apologize.

[03:58:56] First of all, I, I wanted to get a handle on the [03:59:00] money that you're talking about. There's been a lot of discussion here so far about whether or not this is gonna impact the schools that are not participating in charter schools. And I and Senator jal represent large rural districts. I have 24 school districts in my district, and we are very much in trouble right now with the current budget proposal going forward, it's likely that schools are gonna close.

[03:59:30] So any money that doesn't come to my school districts right now is really, really, really bad. So I need to go back to my school districts and tell them how this is gonna impact them. What, regardless of whether or not there's a charter school in the neighborhood, So let's say there isn't a charter school in the neighborhood, but my students, the students in my district are able to go to one that's authorized by this board, and in my world is probably likely to be a virtual school.[04:00:00]

[04:00:00] If I lose a student, if I'm a school superintendent and I lose a student, what effect does that have on the money that I have? Well, you, if you lose a student, you'll have lost that student for your revenue limit projections. And also possibly that student has counts how much you'd get through the equalization formula if you lost that student.

[04:00:22] Right. Now, the, the, the current law caps the amount of money that can be taken outta the equalization form of independent charter schools, I believe at \$57 million. This removes that particular cap. So when that, so all the money that would be diverted into the independent charter schools would come from the equalization aid formula and then, then subsequently districts that share in the equalization formula would be, have we show a reduction.

[04:00:47] So if I, perhaps we shared with you, if I understand what you're saying is that we have a finite pool of equalized aid that goes to all the schools based on the equalized aid formula. It's finite. It's [04:01:00] not gonna change. But we have what, what we call in the parlays of the legislature, a some sufficient fund for the charter schools, which means it's gonna draw as much as it needs to go into that pool.

[04:01:14] So we have a finite amount that's spread around the whole, all the schools in the state, and yet we have an unlimited amount that's gonna come outta that and go to the charter schools and there, and there used to be a cap, and that cap is being removed. And just by virtue of that cap being removed, we know immediately that there's gonna be, what was the number?

[04:01:36] \$23 million More. 12.7. 12.7. 12.7 over in a single year. Okay. So, um, 24, 25 over the biennium. We know immediately that that's gonna come out. We also know that there's over 700 million that's gonna come out in the proposed budget if it goes through. We also know that there's 5.5%, [04:02:00] um, decrease in the revenue caps.

[04:02:02] When I translate that into what's happening in my district, I have an untenable situation. I have schools that cannot survive.

[04:02:15] Is there a question in there? So,

[04:02:22] I, I, I don't, I don't know what to say except to agree with you that this looks like a blank check to me. I, I don't know what else to say except that it, it's gonna be impossible for the schools in my district to continue to function, which

then kind of cuts to the heart of the question that, that we have before us is, do we continue to have equal opportunities for education?

[04:02:50] My son already stays on the bus for an hour and 20 minutes. If we consolidate the schools in my district, he's gonna be on the bus for two and a half hours. [04:03:00] If, if we, that's one way, if we have less and less resources in the rural areas to deal with these problems, we're, we're not gonna have equal education.

[04:03:17] Is that a question or just a statement? I, I, I, I'd like you to allay my fears. Tell me that what I'm telling you is not right. Well, just because I heard over here over the last couple hours that we have equal opportunity for all students, and this is just public education and another option for public education.

[04:03:37] But in my world, it, it's not adding up. I just wondered if you could help me understand how you understand the numbers and the possi, the impact of, uh, and the projection even projecting in the bills projections of, of the increase. You, you have the numbers correct. Cares. Last question about the constitutional authority.

[04:03:57] I, again, I heard over and over again that charter schools are [04:04:00] public schools, but in Wisconsin, we have a constitutional officer who governs public schools. And yet that constitutional officer appears nowhere in this bill in terms of overseeing what happens with the governing board. How can we reconcile the constitution with the fact that he governs public education with the fact that this bill is supposed to address public education, but he doesn't appear anywhere in the bill.

[04:04:29] That, and that is a concern of ours, and that's clarification we'd certainly wanna try to pursue within this bill. Thank you, hunter. Joel, did you ever Yeah, I was, uh, I had pulled out the constitution where it says, supervision of public instruction shall be invested in the state superintendent and such other officers as the legislation shall direct, uh, et cetera.

[04:04:51] Uh, so I mean, it's conceivable if this law was enacted, that the superintendent of public instruction could make [04:05:00] a finding that the decisions that the creation of this board and subsequent decisions are harmful to equal educational opportunity to the rest of the children who don't participate in those schools, is that one possible scenario.

[04:05:19] I, I, that's, that's a possible scenario. How do you, how do, can you, you briefly commented about the constitution, the, the authority given to the superintendent. It seems to be very clear. This is now creating, this is superseding the Constitution. It's basically creating a new authority in the state of Wisconsin, despite what the Constitution says.

[04:05:42] Because throughout that testimony today, they said these are public schools. And the constitution's very clear, the authority for administering public schools should be vested in the superintendent of public instruction. Not some yet, yet to be [04:06:00] destined authority that we create. And am I missing something?

[04:06:08] I don't think, yeah. I think we are concerned about that constitutional issue around this particular bill and the authority of the state superintendent to carry out his duties to supervise public education in this state. Seems to me it should be more strongly stated by the superintendent. That's what's at stake, not just his authority, but we can't just continue to ignore the law in this state can ignore the constitution of this state.

[04:06:32] Okay. Thank you. Okay. Alberta, did you, uh, yeah, we would love to work with you on the constitutional issues. So that's the, the intent that the superintendent, just as a superintendent can close choice schools. He can close any school, he can close any public school. He would still retain that authority. And so I'd be glad to make sure the language clearly reflects that if I can.

[04:06:55] And I don't wanna get into a public debate. Yeah, I appreciate that, Senator [04:07:00] Darlene. But the issue is that to the superintendent, and I think the previous testimony, they did agree with me that there can be adverse consequences to public school kids who aren't in those charter schools. And that's where the superintendent is then left with a situation where public school kids are hurt while some kids are helped.

[04:07:21] And I, that's the point I was trying to make. Thank you. Okay. Any other questions for D p I? If not, thank you very, very much. Um, Sarah? Okay. Next up we have Dan Rad, um, superintendent of Madison Public School, speaking against.

[04:07:43] Good Afternoon. Uh, Senator Olsson, thank you very much for scheduling this important hearing. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the hearing today in opposition of this to this piece of legislation. And while I present in opposition to Senate Bill 22, it is important to understand that our te [04:08:00] my

testimony is not in opposition to charter schools per se, but rather to what is proposed in this legislation.

[04:08:07] We recognize as a school district that chartered schools can play an important role, an innovative role in schools and in our school district. For example, our new Western Mundo Charter School helped us learn about dual language immersion programming. And as a result, the Madison Metropolitan School District initiated an expansion of this program option now in several schools in our district without charter status.

[04:08:30] So we have learned from, uh, the charter that we've had there. My opposition to this legislation is threefold. Number one, public school systems in our state, including the Madison Metropolitan School District, are facing unprecedented challenges from many different angles, not the least of which include ensuring adequate financial resources to educate our evermore diverse student population, providing new benefits for charter schools under the current economic climate.[04:09:00]

[04:09:00] In light of cuts to public schools that are proposed in the governor's budget represents to us piling on to local school district and further, we believe that piling on is unwarranted. Now is not the time to leverage more opportunities and resources for public charter schools when base funding for public schools in total have been threatened.

[04:09:21] If we want to strengthen public education, then that should be the focus of the conversation. And included in that conversation could be the charter piece. But overall, there needs to be the focus on improving public education and strengthening public education in total. Number two, the proposed legislation establishes an unnecessary new state bureaucracy, which we feel undermines local control and ignores the roles and responsibilities of local school boards in making decisions about charters, schools, and other educational options that could benefit our students without imposing unwarranted burdens on the local property taxpayers [04:10:00] allowing other entities to authorize charter schools in the creation of an unelected board at the state level threatens our state's values around local control.

[04:10:08] Local school boards are elected to make these types of decisions, and now is not the time to parcel out what decisions are proper for a local school board to make, and what decisions are not proper for a local school board to make. This

represents one more decision that a local school board having been elected by the local, um, constituency would not be able to make.

[04:10:28] And that's, uh, unfortunate. And then three. There has been no showing that local school boards have been blocking the establishment of promising charter school proposals that are otherwise opposing charter schools to the detriment of student learning. We heard today Wisconsin ranking with, uh, with charter schools.

[04:10:45] And I think that gives evidence that these types of programs have been supported by local school boards. In other words, this bill represents, from my perspective of a solution in search of a problem we would suggest. The real problem here before [04:11:00] this date again, is what will we do to ensure the strongest public school system in our state?

[04:11:06] This bill removes the focus on that conversation, and that's the conversation that needs to take place. And I also believe that charter schools could be a part of that conversation, but here we face at this point in time, a year ago, a 15% reduction in state aid this year, an 8% reduction in state aid in the proposed budget, a 5.5% reduction in the revenue cap.

[04:11:28] And we know that these types of programs are not cost neutral to school districts, um, including ours. And so if there's a, a need to, uh, look at more charters, there's a need to talk about resources for charters. But more important, there's a need to talk about resources for public schools in total. And my hope is that that's is, is what the focus can be going forward.

[04:11:48] That there are hearings in this state that focus on what public schools need to become stronger institutions. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Dan. Chris, a question. It's just you and me. [04:12:00] Senator Darling had to go vote again, so she'll be right back. Thank you very much for your testimony, Sarah.

[04:12:07] Okay, so next up we have David Hanson speaking in favor, and then the people after that are Sandy Weisler, Jill Gaskell, Wayne Duncan,

[04:12:24] Michael Lal, and Lisa Schofield. Good afternoon, Senator. Thank you, uh, for having me today. My name's David Hanson. I'm with the National Association of Charter School, authorizers or NSA for short. Uh, we're a nonprofit organization headquartered in Chicago. I came today from Columbus to be here to help you out with our perspective.

[04:12:45] I don't think, I don't think your mic's on. Sorry. I'll start you over. Okay. Turn help you out with our perspective on what Senate Bill does. We, at nsa, our mission is, is to be an impartial arbiter and promoter of charter. Education [04:13:00] quality. And so, uh, we look at this bill, uh, and that in this particular state and in many states seeking to expand charter education, one of the key hurdles to clear is growing authorizing capacity.

[04:13:11] So, while Senate Bill 22 is about growing charter education, it is necessarily about creating a new, larger policy environment for charter authorizing. Uh, it was mentioned here earlier by the panel before that experience in other states shows that certain policy environment, in certain policy environments, authorizers can't do their work well or they aren't willing, trained or expected to do it well.

[04:13:32] Authorizers in these states may deny strong charter proposals or wrongly approved weak ones. They may overregulate charter schools at the cost of school autonomy, innovation and excellence, or after charter approval, they may abdicate the responsibilities for oversight and in, in extreme situations, even abdicate the responsibility for school closure leaving students in tax dollars.

[04:13:53] Vulnerable. Senate bill 22 reflects lessons from states that we at NSA with our experience, and I could go into it, [04:14:00] but go to our website qualitycharters.org to find out more about our work that our experience in states shows is the right way for state policy to go. When it comes to strong charter school authorizing focused on accountability and delivering quality education.

[04:14:16] Uh, Senate Bill 22 expands the policy and environment in a way that will, uh, embrace N'S top recommendation for the states, which is to create an independent statewide charter authorizer And, uh, this charter school authorizing board. I've heard many comments about it here waiting to testify. Uh, it's, it's, it is important to understand, especially when I talk, when talking about the appointments that good charter authorizing is meticulous work driven by objective criteria.

[04:14:44] Uh, it's been noted about perhaps the political appointees, these won't be plumb jobs to go and do this. And the reason for this is, is because the second part of the bill, uh, requires that the authorizers, including the, uh, state board, uh, adhere to our NSA principles and standards. And I think [04:15:00] that's been distributed to all senators.

[04:15:01] And if you take a look at this, this is very detailed particular work and particularly when, uh, you realize that each of these charter schools is going to have a performance contract between the school and the authorizer, Senator au. Many of those questions that came up earlier where I think it was Todd Ziebarth, said, well, the statutes are silent on this.

[04:15:22] It's actually covered here. And I think it'll help that you are going to expand charters to understand that you are gonna create the oversight regime that will really leave you with high quality ones when all is said and done. Uh, another thing, uh, well let me get into it right now, the depth of principles and standards since you do actually require that authorizers adhere to it and that you use our particular documents specifically in your statutes.

[04:15:46] I think it's just fair to take a look real briefly at the five things that it covers. It talks about defining authorizer commitment. It, it really requires authorizers to have the resources, to have the will, to have the training to do it [04:16:00] right. And I think that this will increase and raise the bar. In terms of charter quality, it describes the application process, it describes the performance contract.

[04:16:08] It describes best practices for ongoing oversight. And then it also gets to something you talked about. It makes sure that closure is anticipated ahead of time. So when you say who gets the facilities, who gets the equipment, charter schools are often able to receive public funds. And so the authorizer is responsible for making sure that the charter school has its books in order to separate and segregate public funds from the private gifts that it receives.

[04:16:30] Okay. Thank you very much. Yep. Okay. Is there any questions? I'll go ahead, Kathleen, do you have a question? Sure. Okay. I, I appreciate that and I will didn't have this before, and I will take a look at it. I'm a, I'm, I'm a little concerned about the way the VAGE is written because it doesn't have a lot of the specifics that you, that you know, that are your world.

[04:16:55] I would just wonder if when you've worked on these, this [04:17:00] legislation in other states is generally the model legislation that you advocate for. Pretty, pretty, um, not, not very detailed. And, and what was your thinking when you advised the people who were working on this legislation to not include some of these quality standards in the legislation?

[04:17:19] Well, I think by saying that you have to adhere to these standards as specifically as it's written in this state, it actually does better than what's done in other states where they don't mention NSA explicitly as Wisconsin statute does. But like the Minnesota statutes basically takes the outline that I have in my testimony and kind of plugs it in, in terms of statutory language that goes over three or four pages.

[04:17:40] And that's, that is probably, uh, you know, more fossils, fossilized, I think is the way to look at it because authorizing is frankly evolving. It is realized now after 10 years of the charter experiment, or 20 years of the charter experiment, when you look to Minnesota, realized to be more important in terms of determining charter quality to scale.

[04:17:58] And so our [04:18:00] standards have evolved some in terms of recognizing replication, recognizing online schools. So in terms of just drafting and how you run your statutes in your state, it seemed to me to be better just to reference our statutes, uh, reference our standards, which then would be, uh, adjusting to changing conditions in education over the coming years without you having to go back and micromanage through the statutes.

[04:18:21] Are, are there competing, um, authorizing entities or are you the only one in the country? We're the only one nationally that does this, so there's not another entity that competes with you. Okay. And, and again, our process, I could get into it is totally transparent. You can see who participated in it. Uh, I don't believe anybody from Wisconsin has, but Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, all around you, Michigan, uh, have, uh, been a part of this process.

[04:18:47] And be happy to describe how we come to these, to these particular recommendations and policies that we recommend. Good Senator, darling. Yeah. Thank you very much for being here. Would you be willing to come back [04:19:00] so we could get in more depth and detail about how you operate and what that line is in the budget about meeting your standards with, uh, all the senators who wanna participate in that discussion?

[04:19:10] Sure. Senator. I just wanna point out that people from Columbus don't always like their trips to Madison, but I'll be happy to. Oh, well I hope we don't meet you in the Big 10. That's the ncaa. That's right. I don't think you No, absolutely. Absolutely. I don't think you made it. Oh, sorry. Go Badgers. Thank you.

[04:19:27] Thank you very much. Yeah, thanks. Thank you. Okay, Sandy Weisler speaking against.

[04:19:43] Hi. Good afternoon. I'm Sandy Whistler. I come from Lake Mills just down the road. Here I am opposed to this bill. The people who have spoken prior to me have spoken far more eloquently than I can speak about the reasons why I oppose it. Mr. [04:20:00] Rad, I thought addressed the issue very well. The men from the d p l addressed the issue very well.

[04:20:07] In many parts of our state, we do not have a public education crisis. I am proud to be an educator in Lake Mills. Our children do well on assessments. Our, I am accountable to my school district. We have high expectations for our students. Putting in more bureaucracy and more laws is not going to solve a problem that exists in only some parts of the state.

[04:20:35] I believe that local control is essential, and I believe that we need to support that. I believe that we need to do all we can to strengthen our public schools, not by taking money away from them and putting it in a different venue, but by providing the money that is necessary for all students to succeed.

[04:20:58] Therefore, I am opposed to this [04:21:00] legislation. Thank you very much. Thank you for your testimony. Jill Gaskell speaking against,

[04:21:18] sorry about that. Thank you. I am Jill Gaskell. I represent Wisconsin p t a. My homeschool district is Peka Tonica. It's a very small rural school district. About an hour southwest of here. Um, Wisconsin. P t a does not support Senate Bill 22. This bill removes a cap on the number of students that can attend charter schools while public schools are taking a hit of over \$1 billion in the proposed state budget.

[04:21:46] Charter schools have a funding some sufficient for both years. This money to fully fund the independent charter schools will come from the general equalization aid for public schools. The legislature doesn't seem to care [04:22:00] about adequately funding public schools, but will pay whatever it costs to make sure that students in independent charters have adequate funding.

[04:22:09] However, if public schools need more revenue, they can raise property taxes up to the revenue limit. The cap is removed for independent charters and virtual charters. Students can open enroll out of their home districts to virtually attend a virtual charter school. This sends more money out of the district.

[04:22:30] Students who switch to charter schools from private schools or home schools will also cause a reduction in the general aid to all public schools. But again, schools can levy additional property taxes to recover the aid. This is defined as local control. This bill also modifies teacher licensure requirements so that one teacher can teach several subjects.

[04:22:55] Whether or not that teacher is qualified to teach all those subjects is quite beside the point. [04:23:00] It would cost the charter too much to hire all the teachers it would take to have them only teach the subjects they're qualified in. So dropping the qualification requirements seems to be the easiest way around this problem.

[04:23:11] This bill gives charter schools a designation of local educational agency or LEA under chapter 20 of the United States Code. Under No Child Left Behind, LEAs are required to have highly qualified teachers. I doubt that dumbing down the licensure procedure will qualify them as highly, highly qualified teachers.

[04:23:33] The Charter School Authorization Board is a board appointed by Governor Walker and the Fitzgerald's we have seen in the last couple of months, just how trustworthy they are. So we will be appointing those who decide who can and cannot operate charter schools. This takes all the authority out of the process.

[04:23:53] This takes all the authority over this process out of DPI where we have the education experts. Mm-hmm. [04:24:00] While most of the impact of these bills looked at today will be felt by Milwaukee Public Schools, this is one state. Wisconsin does not have a pot of money for Milwaukee and a pot of money for the rest of the state.

[04:24:12] Paying some sufficient monies to charter schools takes money out of all schools from superior to Southwestern, from Florence to Racine. The legislative fiscal bureau stated in the fiscal estimate on this bill that on a statewide basis, more pupils enrolling in independent charter schools may drive increased property taxes and lower revenue limits in districts.

[04:24:35] We need to improve the schools all over the state to assure promising future for our children and our state. These bills do nothing to achieve that goal. I think, sir Kathleen, I have just a quick question and I wanted to ask DPI, but maybe. Maybe now is a good time. You mentioned that in, in this bill, when the money is removed, the school district has the option of going [04:25:00] back to the community and asking for additional money.

[04:25:03] Now, that certainly could happen in a referendum, but if I think about this bill in the context of the proposed budget with a 5.5% decrease mm-hmm. In revenue limit, which is real dollars that are gonna have to be either made up or done away with, I'm not so sure that they can levy to that, to that amount unless they went to the community and had a referendum that that was from the legislative fiscal bureau's fiscal estimate.

[04:25:39] Mm-hmm. And you're absolutely right. If, and, and the way I understand the budget is that, um, the revenue limits are, are actually lowered. Mm-hmm. So yes, it would require a referendum and in my community I doubt that it would pass. Yeah. And it certainly wouldn't pass in most of my communities 'cause we've just had a whole bunch of them fail.

[04:25:59] I, [04:26:00] I, I guess do mind if I ask much counsel, is, is that your understanding of this, that there is no way for them to recoup the cost that they're, that that's lost in the context of the proposed budget with a five and a half percent decrease to the revenue limit? I, I'm not prepared to talk about today. I think, I mean, like she said, the fiscal bureau does talk, you know, has looked at it and they talk, they address it in the paper that you have.

[04:26:26] Well, and I read the paper twice. Right. But, but it is in the context of the existing law, not in the context of the budget. Okay. Yeah. I'll have to look at that and I'll talk to Layla about it too. Okay. Okay. Thanks Senator. Darling. Yes. I just a point of clarification, the superintendent, the, the teacher certification, the teachers like, uh, all public schools and charter schools have to have a, a bachelor's degree in their major and they have to be certified in the, that field that's in, in the law.

[04:26:57] And then it, that's not in the proposed budget. [04:27:00] In the proposed budget. Well, that's, we're not talking about the budget. That's the governor's proposal. That's not our proposal. It's not our proposal. And then secondly, the, the superintendent, after they are cer when they're certified, if they're gonna teach multiple subjects, they can only do it if, if the, the superintendent has written the rules and has the competency testing for that.

[04:27:22] So that that isn't an, they can teach any, any level. I understand. I understand. D P I has to modify the teacher licensure in order to have teacher licenses for charter schools. They are not the same license. At least that's implied in the way this bill is. I think. Well, we can talk about it later, but we're not, we're not proposing what the governor's doing.

[04:27:42] We're talking about, we can talk about it. If D P I wants to make the teacher licensure the same as it is for any public school, that's up to them. But that's not the way it's written. Yeah. That's the way the bill is And the, the thing that's changed here, it could I ask large council what, what is written about [04:28:00] teacher certification?

[04:28:00] I mean, what the teacher has to have The multiple topics you mean? No, no, just certification in general. The, um, teachers at charter schools need to be licensed mm-hmm. By D P I. Yeah. Or certified. Yeah. So and, but they write new criteria? No, uh, well in the, in this bill. Mm-hmm. In this bill, it talks about teaching multiple topics under the rules promulgated by D P I.

[04:28:27] Mm-hmm.

[04:28:31] The bill directs d p I to promulgate rules establishing a charter teaching license that allows a licensee to teach multiple subjects in a charter school. But that's, that's only for multiple subjects. But they have to be certified and they have to have their bachelor's degree on top of that. Will, it's, it's will, it's will we heard your, your, your point well taken, and we will make sure that it's clear that [04:29:00] what Senator Darling thinks it is.

[04:29:01] It is, it's obviously muddy now. Right. Well, okay. If I ask alleged counsel to clarify again, because this is our resource for, you know, she's non-partisan. She is a staff to, to all the different committees. So could you just please clarify what the, what the teacher's qualifications are? The bill does not affect the current law provision that requires the teachers to be licensed or certified.

[04:29:29] And it's in the bill because it does affect that provision. But it doesn't, it doesn't change that requirement. Okay, thank you. Okay, Sarah? Yes. Okay, so next we have Wayne Duncan speaking in favor, and then I'm just gonna read the next view. After that, we'll have Michael Langel, Lisa Schofield, Kaleem Care, Kimmy Ishikawa, and Jim Winkle.

[04:29:59] Welcome. [04:30:00] Thank you. I, uh, please forgive my nervousness. I'm not a professional speaker. I'm a parent of two teenage daughters, one who's been in the, uh, Madison Public Schools for the last 10 years or so, and the other who's homeschooled. Uh, I'm in favor of this 'cause I think the basic issue is choice, liberty, and freedom.

[04:30:32] When I came here this morning, I chose to ride the Madison Metro Bus. I could have driven, but you know what? Parking's like down here, it's a hassle. It was cheaper and easier for me to ride the bus. I'll ride the bus home. Nobody tells me what car kind of car I can drive or where I can live. We made the choices for both of our children.

[04:30:54] Our daughter in the public schools is severely disabled with autism. And for her, that was the [04:31:00] best opportunity that we had for her, was that setting our other daughter, after a lot of soul searching, we made the decision to homeschool. She was schooled in a conventional setting for a couple of years that wasn't working for her.

[04:31:16] So then we decided to homeschool. So I'm, I'm familiar with these issues. I, I think it's interesting that

[04:31:25] I've heard a lot today. Some of it I've agreed with, some of it I haven't. Some of it has frankly made me, uh, reconsider my views, particularly on the previous bill where they're talking about the residency requirement in Milwaukee. People said things that I hadn't thought of, and to me, this is what democracy looks like.

[04:31:45] 'cause all of us coming in, stating our views, hopefully giving your members of the committee perspectives from the public so that you can do your very difficult jobs. I appreciate you guys sitting [04:32:00] here and listening to all of us. The, uh,

[04:32:06] the one thing that jumped out at me during the earlier discussion, I don't know if it was, uh, Mr. G or Mr. Conka talking about, uh, I think it was called WINGS Academy in the Milwaukee area, a charter for, uh, kids with special needs, particularly A D H D and autism. I, this today was the first day I learned of that.

[04:32:30] The, uh, teachers in the medicine schools who taught my daughter. They, they work extremely hard. She was a very, very disabled, very difficult child. But had I known of this option, I would've crawled over broken glass to get her there because it was a particular, it's like the people who were talking about charter schools are saying earlier, it's not for [04:33:00] everyone, but it's for the kids who fall through the cracks.

[04:33:04] And I'm not an expert in legislation. This is the first time I've ever attended one of these things. But I do know a little bit about what it's like to have a

child with special needs and try to figure out what it is that they need. And had there been an option like that here in Madison, we would've taken it.

[04:33:23] There wasn't, we couldn't afford a private school, so we did the best we could. And frankly, you talk about school choice, you know, people who are wealthy already have school choice. They can go to private schools. This is about providing opportunities for families who are poor or middle class to get the education for their children, what they need if they're not able to receive it through the public schools.

[04:33:56] And I, I appreciate Senator Darling. I [04:34:00] appreciate your work authoring this bill. From some of the things that I've heard today, I might quibble it. The guys are probably going to tweak it some, but I like the general idea and I appreciate the time to address the, uh, community. Thank you. Thank you very much for coming and testifying and, uh, for your first time here.

[04:34:18] You did a great job.

[04:34:22] Okay. Mike, I'm off. Michael Lal speaking against, from the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association. Is he still here? Uh, yeah. Let's just,

[04:34:42] okay, well, we'll see if he resurfaces. And then we're gonna move on to Lisa Schofield.

[04:34:58] Um, hi, my name is Lisa [04:35:00] Schofield. I'm from Spring Green. Um, and my children, I'm here on behalf of my children. They attend the River Valley School District, which is a small rural school district. Um, and I wrote up a testimony, but I'm just gonna speak to you based on what I've heard today. And, um, starting with listening to the testimony during Senate Bill 20, um, Heather Haviland from I F F, and I don't know what that stands for, um, but she said that her corporation represent.

[04:35:28] The corporation she represents has many schools in its portfolio. Um, and I guess I'm here today because I don't want my children's school in someone's portfolio. Mm-hmm. Um, I want my children's school in my community and, um, I want it under local control. And you don't know my children's school. You don't know my children's school Senator Van, how you know, my children's school.

[04:35:53] And, um, you have no idea how delicate the balance is in those schools. And if we lose a few [04:36:00] kids, we are going, we're gonna be, we've already, we've consolidated our grades. Um, right now what our board is looking at is hiring

50% teachers. Alright? You know how much those people will make every two weeks? I can, I'll tell you.

[04:36:15] Um, they're gonna make \$283 and 53 cents twice a month. And they're gonna be working with 75 kids. We're looking at an art teacher who's gonna be working with 250 elementary students. And we're, we're trying to find someone who will do that for, this is net pay. This is net pay, but that's what buys your groceries.

[04:36:37] That's what pays your bills. Um, we're asking someone to do that for roughly \$6,000 a year to work with 250 students. That's what poor rural districts are dealing with. And what you're introducing is not gonna help my children and it's not gonna help my district. It's going to destroy it. Um, this is not about education.

[04:36:58] This is about money and [04:37:00] control and you're taking it away. Um, I have access to my local school board. I go to the meetings regularly. My representative Howard Markle, he graduated from the same school. My students attend. Um, I have not been able to get in touch with him at all. Uh, at the last board meeting, board members spoke and said they came to visit him.

[04:37:20] They met with him. They explained what's going on in our district, and he told them they were wrong. He said, there's gonna be a surplus. You're gonna have money. Well, our staff has already given back \$750,000 and we still do not meet what we need for next year. We're still over \$200,000 short. The, the year after that we're \$1.2 million short.

[04:37:44] You can't make cuts like that in a district our size and not affect education. I don't want choice. Um, okay. So I'll just end with the statement I did write. How can you even pretend to strengthen our public schools [04:38:00] or our democracy? If you dismantle our state's largest democratic institution, our public schools, and you begin to privatize them or encourage them to serve special interests, how can you even pretend to move our state forward?

[04:38:14] While what you're doing is promoting a fragmented, self-segregated and self-serving model of education. And I think that a fragmented, self-segregated and self-serving model of education is going to create a fragmented self-serving and self-segregated society. This bill is bad for democracy, it's bad for our state, it's bad for education, and it is absolutely bad for my children.

[04:38:41] Thank you very much.

[04:38:45] Question? Sure. Kathleen. I I'm sorry I missed both your name and where you wanna from. I'm from River Valley and my name is Lisa Schofield. And, and tell me a little bit about River Valley. Um, [04:39:00] we're a district with four grade schools and 1300 kids total. And our grade schools with the declining enrollment, you know, a lot of multi-age classrooms, and it's getting to the point where we may have to consolidate those, um, one middle school, one high school.

[04:39:16] What, what's your county? What county? Soc County. Yep. And we are actually in the process of introducing a charter school that's been approved by our board, but even that's causing a lot of divisiveness, um, and a lot of issues. And that's coming locally. I mean, I can't imagine what it's like if we're going to, I mean, I'd like to know who's going to benefit from this, and I just wonder, is it the national authorizing agency on charter schools?

[04:39:45] I mean, is that, who's benefiting from this bill? Because it's not my kids. It's not my school district. Um, and, and I'm, I'm very concerned about this. I'm very passionate about this, as you can probably tell. But I really do appreciate it, and I think that you, [04:40:00] um, I really do appreciate it, and I think that you kind of captured a lot of what's happening outside of maybe the Milwaukee area, which we've heard a lot of voices from Milwaukee, but we haven't heard so many voices from outside of the Milwaukee, Madison area.

[04:40:14] And I, I represent an area that's even much, much smaller than yours. Our, our school district is only 300 students and we've lost 25% of our students in the last eight years or so. And we're, we're, we were at one time the state champion for declining enrollment, which is not anything to brag about, but it's a, it's very, very serious crisis that we're facing right now.

[04:40:36] And, and like you said, we don't need anything to add to that crisis. And a lot of people feel like the current budget and the this bill do really add to the crisis. Yeah. I feel like we're setting up a parallel bureaucracy and it's going to weaken what we have in place. Mm-hmm. And our, my schools are serving my children very well.

[04:40:57] Mm-hmm. And if you want information, the charter school [04:41:00] experiment would be an excellent source. Um, it's a lot of research in one book, and it was just published in 2010. It would be different if I felt like charter schools were gonna be the answer and we're gonna provide these amazing things to my kids, but I don't believe that.

[04:41:14] Okay. Thank you very much. I, I just, I appreciate it. What city is your school in? Spring Green. Spring green you said? And bone, rock and arena. Okay. And plain. Okay. Yeah, I thought it was okay. Thank you very much. Appreciate you coming and testifying today. Kaleem care. Speaking in favor from the Urban League of Madison.

[04:41:42] Which one you sit at anywhere you want. They're both wired.

[04:41:49] All right. Uh,

[04:41:54] appreciate you all doing this today. Again, my name's Kaleem Kier. I'm the president [04:42:00] and c e o of the Urban League of Greater Madison. Uh, I returned here in Mar, March 29th of last year to right the wrongs in our community, um, as they've affected African Americans and other disadvantaged individuals. Uh, my family's been here since 1908.

[04:42:16] My grandfather's Uncle Samuel Pierce, who brought the family here, uh, his picture used to hang in his capital as he served as executive messenger to five Wisconsin governors. My family was poor, never wealthy. I grew up in South Madison. I graduated from West High School. I attended seven years of private school, six years of public school.

[04:42:37] I graduated in a community, whereas I went back and looked at the numbers of young men who graduated, who should have graduated with me, and then three year those who were three years older and three years younger than I knew. I counted 65 individuals. 56 of them have done time in your correctional system in Wisconsin, either in jail or in prison.

[04:42:58] Most of these young men weren't [04:43:00] late arrivals from Chicago. They were young men who grew up in Madison, who grew up in this community whose grandparents moved to this community, or whose great-grandparents moved to this community. So the notion for our people in Madison who believe that all of our challenges are caused by these late arrivals from Chicago is a lie.

[04:43:19] I also want to tell you that, just to give you my background, um, I graduated from West High School with a 1.5 G p a. I served this country in the United States Navy as a submariner, a sonar technician. When I went left the Navy, I started my, I went, spent a year at Hampton University, a historically black college in Virginia.

[04:43:37] It is the first place I ever had a black teacher for years. African-Americans in this community have been arguing with our school system about ensuring that we have staff equity and they have not produced it. Our superintendent presides over a leadership team that for the first time in their in what, 20, 25 years, has no African-Americans and no Latinos [04:44:00] on his leadership team at a time when 53% of our school system is non-white.

[04:44:06] Madison is no longer a majority white school system. Half of our students are poor. And instead of reflecting that among our staff, we're going backwards. I spent, um, several years in Madison. I'm one of the people who initiated the people program here in Madison at UW Madison. I've tutored kids in the school system.

[04:44:26] I've counseled parents in the school system. I've worked as an educational system in the school system. Yesterday I was at McFarland working with teachers who were trying to figure out how they can address the growing diversity needs in their schools. The day right after that, I went and met with kids for two and a half hours with Simpson Street Free Press.

[04:44:43] I spend a heck a lot of my time working with young people in this school system, and I'm a hundred percent in support of this charter school Bill Madison School. So, you know, right now, we, we submitted a data request in August of last year because when I got here, I came [04:45:00] back to Madison after having commissioned a Nation's first, high first, uh, graduation, high school graduation study.

[04:45:05] The reason why we talk about graduation rates is because of this gentleman sitting in front of you. I served as on the panel and oversees, uh, uh, advisor, a Secretary of Education, rod Rod page on No Child Left Behind. I did that a five year, uh, service appointment. I was just recently completed my stint as one of the 45 expert reviewers on President Obama's Race to the Top Initiative.

[04:45:29] And I believe I was the only one from Wisconsin. So I have credentials to be here, and I, I heard the thing beep, but I wanna say this to you. Madison School's 52% graduation rate among black and Latino males. We're starting an all male charter school, and I'm telling the school board, as I've said before, I I would love to see a seven to zero vote because it, outside of the Urban League, the Madison Metropolitan School District has never in the history, in its history, initiated its own plan [04:46:00] without community action to address the equity issues in its school district.

[04:46:03] I know that because I also worked with some of my colleagues here at D P I, I did a 36 year historical for them on how much the state has spent and what the state has done programmatically to address the needs of low income and students of color in the, in the state of Wisconsin. And I can tell you through that most of the energy has always been directed towards Milwaukee.

[04:46:25] Most of it we have a black issue educating black children. Oh, it's just Milwaukee. So what happens is all the issues that are festered in Madison get missed. Madison. Currently 44% of black boys in Madison middle schools are in special education. The school, that's the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction cited them recently for that.

[04:46:47] But there has been no plan. Ask these people if they have a plan to address that they have none. So for those of us who sit in this room and want to act as though public education is the greatest thing since sliced bread, ask, [04:47:00] ask yourself for whom is that? Who does that for whom does that apply to?

[04:47:04] Because it certainly does not apply to us. I'll say the last couple of things here, and then I'll close my mouth. Um, I'm still as ignorant as I might be as some of my colleagues tell me. An ardent supporter of our school system. Our organization is the largest urban league in Wisconsin. We have 44 staff members.

[04:47:25] We serve 28 who will serve 2,800 students with tutoring this year in our partnership with the United Way and the school district, we have 23 full-time staff in the schools. We're working like a dog to raise money to do destination planning for parents in schools, to bring an educational opportunity center to Madison so we can help families get reeducated, go back to school.

[04:47:46] We operate one of the largest workforce training programs outside of the technical colleges in the country. And it is, I mean, in the state and it is growing. So people who sit here and they wanna play the political game or it's the Democrats against the Republicans, the [04:48:00] conservatives against the liberals.

[04:48:01] I can tell you in our organization all we're about is children and families. And so we are about to, we're embarking on a charter school, uh, for young men, Madison Preparatory Academy. We're doing it because the Madison Metropolitan School District has no answers. Miss, uh, Senator Wein, how you talk about the money that's taken outta public education.

[04:48:21] I understand 'cause we don't support the \$750 million cut either, but I will tell you that it's what you do with that money. And I can say that the charter schools, as they were supposed to be, were supposed to be hubs of innovation to show us what our public schools could do. But we've gotten into this impasse where now it's an us against them thing.

[04:48:41] I started the school voucher program in Washington, d c I was the architect and the manager of that effort called the Three Sector Education Initiative. I brought charter school leaders together to start the Charter School Association there, and I work like a dog to raise what is now over \$300 million unprecedented out of the US Congress to fund public [04:49:00] education reform in DC And I have hernias in my repaired hernias in my stomach to show for it.

[04:49:05] But I can tell you that it's, you can have the money, but if you don't have the will or the know-how to do it, you're not gonna get there. Madison schools, a lot of these schools, we have good teachers in these schools who are busting their rump to help our kids, but structurally they are deficient. When I look at my budget and I'm telling them that we're asking for 14,400 a kid, 'cause we want equity, they're spending 14,800.

[04:49:28] Our superintendent tells us they only wanna give us 5,500. So we're gonna have a shortfall of a million dollars to what send more black men to prison. Dane County leads the nation and incarceration among black males between the age of 25 to 29. 47% of them are incarcerated on probation under some form of corrections.

[04:49:47] So if public education is supposed to serve the public's good, what are we using public education for? It has not worked for our children. My family was involved, my mother was not there, but I had a good family, [04:50:00] good members in the community, and they fought like a dog to get us educated. And it hasn't worked yet.

[04:50:08] So I plead with you all to overcome whatever partisan beliefs you have about what charter schools can do. I've seen great charter schools. I've presided over great charter schools, big ones. My wife was assistant head of school at the Hyde School in dc which is doing great work with young people. They get more parents to to, to come out than anyone I know.

[04:50:28] So I ask you guys, I'm pleading with you. We need options. We need our public school resources to provide that. We need them to spend it better. I would

love for you guys to make them spend it better when you're paying 47% of salary for benefits and I'm paying 25 at the Urban League and our entry level salaries for teachers and my staff are about the same.

[04:50:52] There's resources there also we could use more effectively. So the notion that we cut back on schools, somehow they're gonna be negatively affected.

[04:51:00] We gotta know more in depth about what we mean by that. So I'm asking you all our young men, we will not fail them. And sir, I'll tell you, Mr. Olsson, uh, lasting, we thought of three options we could take and they are all still on the table when I came back here because we will not fail.

[04:51:18] Number one was a partnership with the district and that is what we are working in the spirit of. I was unfortunate to hear our superintendent say he was opposed to charter schools, but now I understand why they only wanna give us 5,500 a kid. Second. Second. Hold on second. Second. Is there any time limit we're gonna have chairman.

[04:51:38] I know. Second, we said we could do it independently, but we want our school system to understand how they can educate our young men better. So we desire for them to learn from us and learn with us. And third was a legal route to put that on the table as well. And we've decided not to go there, but I'm pleading with you all.

[04:51:59] Okay. Thank you. Thank [04:52:00] you very much. We did go over. Is there any questions? Yeah. Are we um, not having time limits on testimony? We are moving forward. Yep, we are. Thank you very much. Just wanna make sure. Senator Growth Grossman, I'd like to thank you to be here. Were you having any problem getting your, your boys only school going?

[04:52:18] I don't know yet. Uh, we have board members who are supporting us, but we keep hearing, you know, one way or the other. We desire to have this school authorized by the Madison School Board, but we would seek the option if we had to. But I'm hoping that our board doesn't put us in that position. You think you're gonna get it through the board?

[04:52:35] Um, I'm hopeful. Okay. Thanks. Yeah. Thank by the way, thanks for testifying. Very powerful testimony. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Okay, Kimmy Awa, speaking against, followed by Jim Winkle, Maureen Sullivan, Jesse Lynn, and Anna Haley Locke. I would like to thank the [04:53:00] Honorable Committee members for allowing me this opportunity to speak.

[04:53:03] My name is Kimi Awa. I am a public elementary school teacher. I've taken my one annual personal leave day to be here speaking out against Senate Bill 22 because I must do whatever I can to defend the children of Wisconsin. I'm a second career teacher. Before becoming a teacher, I worked 14 years for a defense contractor.

[04:53:22] I was in the private sector with full healthcare benefits and a funded retirement plan, and taxpayers footed the entire bill for my employment. When I decided to leave my job at Lockheed Martin to become a public school teacher, I had to go back to school to learn how to teach. I earned a master's degree in education and a teaching license, and I got my first teaching job in Washington State.

[04:53:43] My salary was half of the, that I had received as a software engineer. My benefits were somewhat decreased, and I had more unpaid hours to donate to my employer. But I felt that my new work had much more value than developing the glorified computer games for Lockheed Martin, both from myself and for [04:54:00] taxpayers.

[04:54:01] After five years of teaching, I moved back to Wisconsin where I grew up because my son was ready to go, ready to enter kindergarten, and I wanted him to go to school here. I also had to go back to school to meet the high standards required to earn a wa wa, Wisconsin State Teaching certificate. I'm now in my eighth year of teaching with the Madison School District.

[04:54:21] Never have I worked with more dedicated professionals than I have. Um, here in Wisconsin schools, Senate Bill 22 is designed to undermine public education and to move tax dollars from public schools to charter schools. The public is taxed for these schools, but the schools are not accountable to the public at a local level.

[04:54:43] The tax funded schools don't have to teach all children. And, um, there's been some question earlier today about this whole, um, um, the requirements for the licensure. Um, it, um, [04:55:00] does the wording, what does the wording say? It's, um, it requires them to promulgate rules. Um, the, uh, d p I already has rules for certifying teachers.

[04:55:10] It already has rules for certifying teachers in multiple areas. And so I can only assume that if they're being asked to promulgate rules to certify teachers in multiple areas, it means lowering the standard of what of, of what they already have. Um, mm-hmm. And so I, and so it seems to me that the bar is lowered for teacher requirements, um, in the tax funded charter schools.

[04:55:36] Um, people keep saying, insisting that these are public schools. The only thing I can figure out is that they are paid for by public dollars. They are overseen by a board of political appointees. Earlier today, I heard somebody say, oh, yes, but even though it is the governor and the Fitzgerald's, right now appointing these people, they have to appoint, you know, at least one member from the mi from the [04:56:00] minority party.

[04:56:01] Um, so it sounds like you're asking them to, um, to appoint partisan members to this board, which I think is itself kind of odd. They're political appointees and you're saying that they need to be partisan. Um, and they are not elected by a school board. They're not overseen by an elected school board. And that seems to me to be taxation without representation.

[04:56:23] I don't know who is supposed to gain from taking tax money away from our public schools and giving it to the private schools with no voter accountability. I don't think it's our kids. I don't think it's our state. The duty of this committee is to support and improve our excellent public school system and not to destroy it.

[04:56:39] Your obligation is to let Senate Bill 22 die in committee. Okay. Thank you. Is there any questions? Not, thank you very much. Okay. Jim Winkle speaking against,[04:57:00]

[04:57:00] my name is Jim Winkle. I'm not a teacher. I am not a lobbyist or a political person. I don't make a habit of attending hearings like this. Um, but I'm a concerned citizen. Uh, I've spent more than 50 years in Wisconsin and I care dearly about our state. I'm also a parent of a high school junior. I am not opposed to the creation and running of charter schools, uh, as we currently do.

[04:57:26] I wrote to the sponsors of this bill, um, asking them some big picture questions, uh, about it. I asked, what problems are you trying to solve with this bill? What do you think are the intended consequences of this bill? And what do you think are the unintended consequences of this bill? I didn't hear back from any of them.

[04:57:45] I would love to hear your answers to these questions now. So while I don't really know why this bill was created, I can say that I see many problems that will result from it.

[04:57:58] First of all, is it [04:58:00] true that charter schools are not required to accept everyone? Um, I if so, I see some real problems with fairness and humane

treatment of all kids in Wisconsin. And if we go down that road, as others have said, money will be drained from the public schools, uh, which are then less able to, uh, take care of students with special needs and there, but for the grace of God, go.

[04:58:21] You and I, I see problems with accountability and local control. No longer will there be an elected board to be a watchdog. Why remove that important relationship between school districts and charter schools? That's like ripping up all the stop and go lights in a city. We need some control. I've worked in the field of information technology for 30 years, yet I have serious reservations about virtual schools.

[04:58:48] The more time we spend on computers, the more we regress socially, we're less able to interact with other human beings in a respectful manner. In my mind, social education and leveling [04:59:00] the playing field is pretty much the reason for kindergarten and a big part of other grades too. One final note. I know someone who is an advisor in the School of Education at UW Madison, and she said several students are seriously questioning whether or not to go into the field of education anymore, to continue in that field because of the ravaging by any and budget, the budget repair bill, and now SB 22.

[04:59:24] In summary, I don't really see anything positive about this bill, and I see many problems with it charter schools. Sure. But please do not support this bill. Okay, thank you. Is there any questions? Thank you. No, thank you very much, sir. Maureen Sullivan, speaking in favor,

[04:59:47] Tella to come down here. I Okay. Alberta.[05:00:00]

[05:00:00] Alberta, thank you again. I appreciate being able to speak with you. Um, I'd like to make a couple clarifications. You had a question regarding special ed students and the percentages at Woodland School, who I represent. 11% of our students are called students with special needs. Uh, you ask if there are any, there was a comment about would someone with a severely um, disabled student come to a charter school?

[05:00:33] I take offense at that. Come to my school and see before you make comments, we take everyone who comes. I'm very fortunate that we have waiting lists because our families stay. That's our goal, to take them in when they come in four K and to keep them, I retain them. So I don't have a lot of [05:01:00] openings, but I do need to take the students that do come into my door.

[05:01:05] I'd like to address a specific section of Bill 22. That's the section that would allow a charter school contract to provide for more than one charter school and allows a charter school governing board to enter into more than one contract. We are authorized as an independent charter school by U W M. We have 310 students, a very diverse, one of the very few Milwaukee schools that is diverse, diverse student population.

[05:01:36] 30% are African American, 3% Asian, 18% Hispanic, and 48% Caucasian. I like to think that it mirrors the, uh, the, um, diversity of the city of Milwaukee. Woodlands is currently in its seventh year as a charter school. We have had two contracts with U W [05:02:00] M. During that period of time, a contract lit, um, lasts for five years.

[05:02:07] If during those five years I do not fulfill the requirements, I don't have my contract renewed. We're considered a successful student. A successful school testing data demonstrates that students are learning. Eighth graders successfully move on to college preparatory high schools. In the last school year, parents volunteered for over 5,000 hours.

[05:02:33] Our parents come into our school, they get involved. The eighth graders volunteered for over 900 hours outside of our school. Teachers, staff and families remain at our school. Ideally, we would like to start a second school beginning with four K and five K in first graders each year we would add new students in four K.

[05:02:58] We would teach the school culture to [05:03:00] the youngest and most impressionable. The school culture is what is crucial. The school culture would grow as the student body was retained and progressed through the grades towards eighth grade. Woodlands would then realize the replication of its model. Right now, we can't start a second school under our current contract.

[05:03:22] However, we have a board of trustees, we have a model with the curriculum needed and we have a waiting list. If we could add a second school under our current contract with U W M, the reality of a second school could happen without drawing attention away from our current school. The original model, the time is up.

[05:03:41] You've got that printed? Yes. Could you do, um, could you give us a copy of that you're printed so that we could have that at a later time? I do have with me for the U W M to our charter schools, their annual report, which would answer your

questions. Oh, that'd be great. [05:04:00] Okay. I could give that. Any other que ls there questions?

[05:04:02] If not, thank you. We'd just appreciate a copy of a written statement at a later date. Thank you. The page here will circulate it to us. She's right here.

[05:04:15] Jesse Lynn speaking against.

[05:04:24] Okay, we'll set that aside for a moment. Anna Haley Locke speaking against, you know, some more ahead of time. Yeah,

[05:04:36] and Anna will be followed by Dan McKinley, Adrian Emerson, John Scheller and Ted Ham. Chair Olson, members of the committee, thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Ana Haley Lock. Uh, I'm speaking in opposition to Senate Bill 22. My husband, two kids, and I relocated from Seattle [05:05:00] to Madison. About two years ago, Eric and I had accepted jobs at UW Madison.

[05:05:04] One of the reasons that we were drawn to Wisconsin was for its excellent public schools. And by that, let me clarify. At this point, given our discussion today, I'm referring to traditional public schools two years later. We're pretty devastated, not because our experience with Madison schools, which are everything, not because of our experience with medicine public schools, which have been everything that we hope that they would be and more, and we're concerned about a lot more admittedly than K12 education issues.

[05:05:36] But we are alarmed by what will happen to K12 education if budget cuts along with the series of bills, including SSB 22 being discussed today. Pass As a professor who studies social policy, the first thing I ask when evaluating a proposed policy change is what does the research say? Now, let me know.

[05:05:58] Sometimes research can't give us a [05:06:00] definitive answer. Sometimes it's too soon to know whether a policy idea like expanding charter schools has merit. But in this case, the research is clear, the findings are in and they are definitive. Charter schools do not perform better than public schools in spite of having a host of advantages, and they come at the expense of reduced investment, financial and otherwise in public schooling of a traditional nature.

[05:06:33] To use that term, I guess research tells us that compared to public schools, 17% of charter schools get higher test scores. 46% gains that were no different than their public counterparts and 37% significantly worse. To restate that, in a major

national study conducted by a Stanford economist, 83% of charters did the same [05:07:00] as or worse than public schools at the same time, compared to neighboring public schools of a traditional bent, charters enroll smaller proportions on average of students with limited English or who have learning disabilities like my own daughter, or who have emotional and behavioral challenges like my own son.

[05:07:20] That means the students who are the hardest to educate are left to the regular public schools disproportionately, and that charter schools get the students who are the easiest to educate. Charters are also typically able to counsel out the lowest performing students in some, according to Diane Ravitch.

[05:07:37] I'm happy to share any of these sites that I'm referring to today. 50 to 60% of students starting in charter schools leave before graduation. The students left over are thus even easier to educate. And charters tend to have greater access than traditional public schools to private sources of funding, such as through foundation, state and federal government grants.

[05:07:59] Yet [05:08:00] even with all of those advantages over public schools, charters perform no better or worse on average. That's quite stunning, really. But we're in Wisconsin. So what about Wisconsin? What's the story on charters in our state? Let's take Milwaukee, which deservedly is major attention today. In a March, 2009 report, researchers, L two and Witt of the University of Wisconsin Madison found that there is no statistically significant relationship between charter school attendance and student performance on reading achievement for the most recent years of their study.

[05:08:35] There is no significantly significant difference between charter schools and traditional public schools and student math achievement and any positive impact on charter schools, of charter schools on achievement relative to traditional public schools declines the more years a student spends in a charter school.

[05:08:53] I conclude. So again, the research to me seems pretty darn clear, and that makes this legislative direction [05:09:00] extra heartbreaking. You, as our elected representatives are now considering a range of measures including SB 22 to expand charter schools as well as proposals to expand the similarly ineffective Milwaukee Choice program and to severely cut funding to public K 12 education.

[05:09:20] The combined effects will be to gut a system of public schooling on which Wisconsin families and neighborhoods depend. As a researcher, as a new Wisconsinite and as a mother, I implore you not to support this course of action.

Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator. Senator Reinhold. Just I appreciate the work that you did and you went through it so fast, which I knew you had to do, but you went through it so fast I couldn't write fast enough.

[05:09:49] Okay. Is there any way you could get me a copy of your work and, and some of the, it's not to clarify, it's not my work and I'm actually not an education researcher. I'm, I study labor ironically. Um, [05:10:00] but, but I have a list that they are related. Oh, they're highly related. We, we are in agreement. Um, I have a list of the sources that offers, um, you know, uh, web links to every report that I refer to.

[05:10:11] Diana Ravich I would refer to as, I mean, she, one of the studies I, I recognized when I was preparing for this, but some of the studies I didn't. So it would be really helpful if, if you could give the page who will come forward somewhere and, um, give the page your testimony and just wait for a minute while she makes a copy of it.

[05:10:30] I really appreciate your work. Thank you. Thank you. Is there any other questions? If not, thank you very much for sticking around and testifying. Dan McKinley, speaking in favor from pave.

[05:10:48] Okay,

[05:10:55] Mr. Chairman. Ah, it's working. Members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify. My name's [05:11:00] Dan McKinley. I'm a president of pave a non-profit organization based in Milwaukee that whose sole mission is to make, uh, more educational opportunities possible for low income families and to make those opportunities.

[05:11:15] Excellent. Uh, just a bit about pave because I've heard others talk about their perspective. This is not my perspective, it's a perspective of my board. Uh, 16 leaders from Milwaukee, a diverse group, uh, that includes wealthy business leaders and, uh, church leaders who've taken the vow of poverty. Black, white, Democrat, Republican.

[05:11:38] The only thing they all agree on is that we have to increase the number of excellent schools in Milwaukee, whether it's public schools, charter schools, wherever we can find them, we really need to increase them because the kids in our city are suffering. We've heard some testimony about that earlier. I have a, my written testimony is this annual report, which details [05:12:00] pays experience over the last 10 years and talks about how we invest in schools.

[05:12:05] Uh, I'm very pleased to follow the woman, uh, who just spoke to you because I would agree with all of her research. If you were to take, uh, charter schools in general, just like public schools in general, you'd find that in Milwaukee they're barely distinguishable. But what if you could find those schools that were really doing an outstanding job, educating low income kids, doing incredible work with them.

[05:12:29] I think those are the schools you would wanna invest in, and that's what PAVE does. In this report, we talk about our quality assessment process that we've perfected over a number of years. It's consistent with NSA's, uh, standards as well as the National Consortium on Charter School Quality. And there's no mystery to what makes a good organization really good or sustainable.

[05:12:53] Good governance and good leadership, good financial controls and the, and good investment in money, the way they partner with [05:13:00] parents and community organizations. And finally the way they measure and, and look at, uh, the, um, performance of kids in their schools, how they improve their education. We assess all that very carefully and we're able to identify those schools that can be become really excellent.

[05:13:16] And in this report you'll see 20 of them, but I'd like to just highlight one because I'm glad I did not have any more prepared testimony than this report and a few comments because I think there's one story in here to be more. Specific and, and less abstract that might help you understand why we need better authorizers in Milwaukee.

[05:13:36] Uh, about in the middle of the page, middle of the book, there's a picture of WINGS Academy. These two women. What PAVE does is we try to find in great leaders with good governance, and then we invest in them, help grow their school. Wings Academy was chartered by m p s. It did not have a functional board.

[05:13:57] It did not have a business plan. It did not have much [05:14:00] of anything except these two women who were extraordinary educators who had special need kids. One was autistic, one their children was autistic. They started this school for special needs kids whose needs were not being met in m p s, 75% of their kids are special needs kids.

[05:14:18] And that ranges from autistic to learning disabled. But there's, they're very difficult to educate kids. And what we saw in these two women was a chance to make that school better. We're helping them build a board, a business plan.

Hopefully as an M P S charter school, they'll be able to, to lease one of the empty facilities you heard about earlier and grow to become a really good school.

[05:14:41] But this school should never have been authorized in the first place. What we hope to see is the highest standards of authorization that are possible in this bill. Uh, and so that any school that's chartered would live up to those high standards and be the exemplars that we [05:15:00] hope to see that meet the needs of kids who are not being met in a traditional public school system.

[05:15:06] Uh, I wish I could go further into some of our other work, but I would just, we'll, we'll read the book. Good. That's a good book. Okay. Thank you very much. Is there any, sure. I, I'm trying to understand how this whole industry is structured and I, I read a little bit about education management organizations and charter management organizations, and I wondered if you could tell me if you are an E M O or A C M O and what that means and what it is specifically if, if, if you can, what you do.

[05:15:41] And I have a management background, so talk to me in management terms. Uh, we are what would be known globally as an N G o, a non-government organization, a private non-profit organization. That's not what I had in mind. You have a specific role that you play Yes. With these charter schools. [05:16:00] And I want you to be honest and tell me what it is.

[05:16:03] We are a nonprofit organization whose sole mission is to invest in schools to help them grow and become excellent and then to grow more, to serve more kids through a loan and, and grant fund. We raise funds from the public and invest them in private schools. They're about in public schools. Excuse me.

[05:16:20] Public charter schools. In this case, there are about six organizations like this in Milwaukee that are non-profit, publicly supported with an independent, diverse board who are looking at ways of improving the schools in Milwaukee. So that's what we are non-profit with a very specific mission. Does that answer your question, Kathleen?

[05:16:41] But you have a management function? We do not have a management function. We are a support function. We, when we look in, in our assessment of schools, as I said, with governance and leadership, for example, we, we collect a lot of information. Is the board independent? Does it get involved in strategic planning?

[05:16:58] Does it have proper oversight? [05:17:00] Does it approve a budget? Does it, does it evaluate the c e o annually? All these things. And we can, we can look and see if they have a good governance structure and a good leader, maybe we can make them bigger and stronger. So it's really more of a support organization. We don't set goals for the schools.

[05:17:15] We listen to their visions and what they're trying to achieve, like these two women. And then we find the, the means to give them the capacity to achieve that specific vision for low income special needs kids. And, and what kind of people donate to your organization that eventually gets money to the list of donors is in there.

[05:17:32] We have several hundred donors across the board, individuals, foundations, businesses. So this is a way for businesses to be able to donate to public schools to help that public school grow. They're mainly individuals. Frankly. They give us money. It's, they're people who are concerned about the wellbeing in Milwaukee and as as concerned citizens.

[05:17:54] And I said, this board is greatly diverse. You would not be able to find a more diverse board in Wisconsin, I [05:18:00] don't think. And their sole concern is increasing, like Northwest Mutual National Insurance Services, Christ the King Church, uh, Mount Mary College. If you look down the list, you'll find a great diverse board that, uh, I think really represents the interests of kids in Milwaukee.

[05:18:21] No special interests. All right. Thank you. Any other questions? If not, thank you very much. We will, uh, look at your book. Adrian Emerson, speaking against, followed by John Scheller, Ted Ham, pat Schmidt, Susan Minter, and Dr. Robert Morlin. Good afternoon. I come to you as a parent and a, an educator, um, in the Middleton School District, which is a wealthier district, but yet we are still faced with problems.

[05:18:55] I feel that the common trend we see is more of a decrease in funding for public [05:19:00] education and that we are trying to fix it with this bill, like this, taking money away from public education. I feel that we're prematurely giving up on public education. I come to you as a special educator. I want to know what guarantees do you have that the kids in which I work with, who tend to have more diverse needs.

[05:19:18] Many of them are on the autism spectrum, have cogniti disabilities. What guarantees do you have that they're going to be allowed in these schools and what

happens when the services that they need in these public or charter schools are not able to be met? What then happens with those students? It is important that we keep going with an inclusive setting in our education.

[05:19:40] I feel that this is going to divide out who can afford and who can advocate, and who can place their kids in charter schools. I don't want my kid to be forced to be either in a public school that they are, have access to or be put on a waiting list. To me, it's dividing out who's advocating for their [05:20:00] child and who has the background to know where to go.

[05:20:02] There's too many factors. I believe that there's a waiting list to hear we have in charter schools. Why are we not looking to invest within our public schools? Make them be better. Why is the only answer to create and develop more charter schools? That's my question for you. And what is your guarantee to know that all, all needs will be met in appropriate manner within these charter schools?

[05:20:29] Thank you. Appreciate it. Any questions? If not, we appreciate your testimony and your questions.

[05:20:38] John Scheller from WAC speaking against, [05:21:00]

[05:21:03] is it all right if my daughter joins me? That'd be great. She was registered to testify also, I think, uh, to say that I'm here representing WAC is a bit of a misnomer. I'm actually here representing myself and I speak for no one other than myself. But I would like to tell you a bit of a story. I've, uh, my name is John Scheller.

[05:21:24] He wrote on that form. I spent, uh, 15 years on the Montello School board. Seven of those years, uh, as board president. And if you'll look at the second line of my testimony, when you see it in the second line, uh, where it says board resident, I would like to have you put a p in front of the word resident.

[05:21:42] So you don't think that I lived in the school board. Uh, sometimes the president does

[05:21:51] Montello's, a small district about 60 miles north of here. We have 750 students approximately in our [05:22:00] school in Montello as in most small school districts. Our school is the heart of the community that was evidenced in Montello and Westfield by the fact that a referendum on the con on the consolidation effort was rejected.

[05:22:16] I. By both districts. The Montello school board has done everything it can to reduce costs. We started early in about 1999 and admittedly we did the easy stuff first. We cut a few teacher's aides and then over time we cut them all and the janitor, the only aide there left are those who deal with are certified to deal with special education students are janitorial staff, barely keeps up with the housekeeping.

[05:22:47] So we've been bringing in federal prisoners during the summer to help catch up on house on our housekeeping. Then we started reducing staff, combining programs, maximizing [05:23:00] our class offerings. Originally the board's goal was uh, not to cut programs, but after three attempts, montello managed the capacity \$900,000 referendum to meet those goals.

[05:23:13] And unfortunately, there hasn't been an opportunity since, nor is it in the cards that we will be able to pass another. Inevitably we started to reducing, started reducing some of our offerings. We cut the staff in our foreign language department, the agricultural department, the art department, the music department, and business education by 45%, turning five full-time positions into five part-time positions.

[05:23:43] All of the original teachers have left the district and all have been replaced by either retired teachers or young teachers looking for their first jobs. It was a horrible decision and choice to have to make in a boardroom. While it was a necessary [05:24:00] one, we sold the buses private carrier, we put off much needed repairs and then made those repairs only when the roof actually leaked and that the bells didn't ring anymore.

[05:24:15] We have had, we have done everything we can to reduce energy consumption. We've lowered the heat cut back on lighting, we've cut back on air conditioning. We've limited the use of the district's vehicles. Montello has cut and cut and cut until there's nothing left to cut. And where are we now? Amazingly that school is maintaining, not by much, but we have, they have found a way.

[05:24:42] Montello has always been a fecal district and despite the state's failure to keep its end of the bargain on two thirds funding and declining enrollment, it looks like we might survive for years until SB 22 came along. For years, the Republican mantra has been [05:25:00] one of local control with the state's pledge of two thirds funding for public schools in Wisconsin and our school board with the pledge of two thirds funding in public schools.

[05:25:12] Our school board has lost much of that local control. As Betty SSB 22 will demolish any remaining illusions of the concept by empowering the unelected State Charter school board to create independent charter schools and force local school districts to pay them, pay for them without any recourse. John?

[05:25:33] Yes. Time is up. Can you, you've got a copy of that. Can you give us that? Yes, I do. We have copy. I would Oh, oh yeah. Excuse me. We have it already. I saw it. Yes. I changed the, I put the P in front of the r May I read just one very short quote? Sure. And it was from Abraham Lincoln. Nearly all men can survive adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

[05:25:59] What will our [05:26:00] students of tomorrow think of our character tomorrow? Thank you. Was your, did you? Um, I, I'm better at brevity than my dad. Okay. Um, what, what's your name and we'll, yes, what's your name? My name is Yetta Laki. I'm a high school social studies teacher at Montello. Um, I'd like you guys to consider the impact of this bill on small schools and towns like Montello.

[05:26:23] This year, our general school aids charter reduction was over \$26,000, and the proposed expansion of two R independent charter schools will greatly increase that reduction. Next year. The proposed budget will cut our school revenues by over \$660,000 next year and almost \$870,000 the year after that.

[05:26:43] Compared to current law. We can't cut anything else. Right now. We offer online classes, and I teach different classes every hour of the day to make sure kids have enough electives. If this bill passes and our students can leave the district to attend independent charter schools, the funding formula is going to make it look like we have [05:27:00] more income from property value than we really do, and we will lose even more state aid.

[05:27:04] Our district can't survive this, and it will only be a short amount of time before school then closes. Um, but in communities like Montello, it's not just the school that closes without our school. Montello will die. Our grocery store will close, our gas stations will close, our greenhouse will close. The people who can get out will, and the people who can't, won't, they'll be left behind in houses with significantly reduced value.

[05:27:27] They'll have to drive a half hour to buy groceries. It'll be a ghost town like PWA or Endeavor or other communities have lost schools. Um, I know not all students are succeeding in our public schools, but the innovation and flexibility that

we need can come in. The charter schools that that exist in are being formed within our current school districts.

[05:27:45] Um, we have a charter school at Montello with an environmental focus that's doing a great job right now with that, and it's benefiting the whole district. When they find something good, we implement it. Um, but I think it's a mistake to allow to our charter schools to expand independently. Um, [05:28:00] in small towns, the charter schools would cause the schools to close.

[05:28:03] Instead of providing choices, it would take choices away. Students who thrive in our public school system will face the choice of being bused to a larger district or taking courses virtually with teachers. They'll never meet. They won't learn the value of their community and the community won't learn the value of them.

[05:28:19] Um, when I first started teaching, um, my favorite high school English teacher was about to lose their battle with cancer. So I went to her and I said, okay, quick lesson. What do I need to know about being a teacher? And she told me that when I walk into a classroom, my number one job is to love the kids, and the ones who are hardest to love are the ones who need it the most.

[05:28:37] And that has helped me so much. Teaching at Montello, um, almost half my kids receive free and reduced lunch. We are the third least healthy county in the state in Marquette County. We deal with a lot of, of poverty and alcoholism. Um, our kids parents either don't or can't meet their needs. A lot of the times I don't just teach my kids, I love them and I raise them.

[05:28:59] Um, [05:29:00] I saw the importance of our local schools one day last June, um, after, after the school year ended, our district started training all of its teachers for online certification so that we could offer more, um, choices within our school. And we left. Um, at a little bit early that day. We all went over to Westfield High School for the funeral of a local math teacher named Andy Poe.

[05:29:21] Um, about he was a young husband and father who, who died in a tractor accident. And more than 1500 community members stood in the rain for over two hours to get inside for the visitation. We passed huge displays made by his students of pictures, poems their favorite. Mr. Pope quotes. Kids were crying so hard they couldn't even stand up.

[05:29:40] Um, and after having that training that morning, but virtual schools, the shortcomings of virtual education were so obvious. Um, we can't revisit this in a few years and decide that we want to undo it. Our towns will be gone by then. Um, this this, if, if the focus of this is for, for bigger cities and [05:30:00] the issues facing them, all of these smaller towns are gonna be wiped out in the process.

[05:30:05] Um, I guess I lied about the brevity thing. Yeah, that's okay. He didn't, this she's way doesn't fall far from, doesn't fall far from the, she's way better than I am. Yeah. John, you should be very proud. Thank, thank you. Thank you very much. Is there any questions? Thank you. Ted Ham speaking in favor. And, uh, he'll be followed by Pat Schnitt, maybe it's Schmidt, um, Susan Minter, Dr.

[05:30:37] Robert Morlin, Allison Pratt, Beth Sandal, Rose Fernandez, Lawrence Lowland, and Marjorie Passman. Good afternoon. Good afternoon. My, my original comment said Good morning. But yeah, so Senator Olsson, members of the committee, I [05:31:00] appreciate, I appreciate the time to listen. I, and I am amazed at you're meeting stamina because I don't think I could handle this.

[05:31:07] Um, specifically I want to talk about, um, I want to talk in favor of the bill and specifically the, the NSA standards that it implements. I come from a, a background in charter schools. Over the last five years, I've started two charter schools, but I also serve as the Schrogan area school district's chief Authorizer, so I serve as the administrator who authorizes the charter schools in Sheboygan.

[05:31:31] Over the last seven years, we've authorized 16 charter schools. Right now, we've closed two charter schools down already. We did it because we saw charter schools as a means for us to differentiate, excuse me, differentiate education for our kids. We saw it as a way to turn our schools to local control, to even more local control, right at the school level, through the governing boards that are established in these charter schools.

[05:31:56] We saw it as a way to differentiate opportunities for our kids, not through private [05:32:00] education, not through other means, but through a means that are, that held schools accountable to W K C E scores and to map scores. Every single year, I present to my school board the results of my public charter schools, my own specific ones, and everybody, everybody else's in the district are our governing boards that run.

[05:32:18] Each of these charter schools are public school, our function as public board, public school board. So we publicly post our meetings. We take public input.

Everybody is, is part of this. So that's something that I think needs to be cleared up and, and, and just part of the, part of the reason why we decided to do this in Sheboygan.

[05:32:36] Ultimately though we saw it as a way to differentiate the needs for our students, really created a, a, a model for education within Sheboygan, where everybody was able to have something that met their needs so that every kid can succeed. Going through that process, what we realized were, what we realized was that we needed a set of standards in order to make that happen, in order to make a process [05:33:00] that was objective, a process that held schools accountable, a process that held ourselves accountable, we adapt.

[05:33:07] We adopted, last year, our school board adopted the NEX standards and said, as a school district, this is what we will use for judging our school districts, our, our public charter schools within our district. It is vitally important that we do this as a state. It's vitally important because currently with, within the current framework, I see a number of schools who try to get started.

[05:33:27] They're not allowed to get started. That's why you're seeing this push for non instrumentalities and for outside authorizers, things like that. We also see schools that suddenly come to the end of a five year contract, and they're either shut down or only allowed to go on for, for a couple years. They're only allowed to do that, and they're never really given a reason why.

[05:33:47] I can tell you that in our role in terms of bringing in the n a standards, what we've done is we've structured a conversation with our charter schools. We structured a conversation with our board of education. We structured a conversation that says, as, as a school [05:34:00] district, this is our commitment to starting these schools.

[05:34:02] This is how we're gonna make sure that we're authorizing them, and we'll also make sure that. That we have standards and a clear set out process in place to make sure that these, these schools remain viable. If they're not viable, we shut 'em down and we have a clear laid out process for that. So thank you very much.

[05:34:18] Is there any questions? Not Thank you.

[05:34:24] Pat Schmidt speaking against.

[05:34:41] Okay.

[05:34:46] Yeah, you have announced her. Good afternoon. Good afternoon. Um, my name is Pat Schmidt. It's an an honor to appear before you today. Um, I'm appearing, uh, today in opposition to SB [05:35:00] 22, the charter school expansion bill. Um, I've been a teacher in the Woma Area School District for 35 years, and I'm a music teacher and I'm a constituent of Senator Olsons.

[05:35:12] Um, in the Woma Area School District, we have about 1600 students in, uh, four K through 12th grade. And, uh, we have about a 70%, uh, poverty rate. Uh, 70% of our students are, uh, on free and reduced lunch. Uh, in Wamo, we're bracing for the worst. Uh, we have, uh, in 2011 12 our loss, uh, under the, uh, new, uh, budget proposal.

[05:35:37] We'll be about \$1.3 million in allowable revenue. And in 2012 and 13, we stand to lose about \$1.7 million. Our charter school reduction for 2010 11 was \$78,000. We already are suffering a record loss. If we expand the charters, we'll have to pay more money and we will lose [05:36:00] students. I'm wondering if it's fair to the taxpayers and the students in the district like Oma to kind of take a double whammy, uh, where we have to pay more and we are going to be losing our students as well.

[05:36:14] Um, I wanna echo some of the things that have been told to you today about small schools. Uh, I teach in, uh, a small school, red Granite Elementary School, uh, which only has about a hundred students, but it is a nationally recognized blue ribbon school. Uh, in 2008, if that school closes, our town is going to die as well.

[05:36:37] Just like you've heard, when I give a Christmas program in Red Granite, I have a hundred students on stage singing, but I have 400 people in the audience. That community supports that school. If that school goes away, the town goes away as well. I was [05:37:00] wondering why the emphasis on charter schools, and I noticed that one of the reasons that people gave today was that they encourage innovation, but yet in our public schools, because we're cutting all of these programs, we're cutting out our most innovative programs as well.

[05:37:18] Programs like music, art, gifted and talented, those programs are being cut. And if we gave money back to the public schools instead of taking it away, our districts would be able to have more innovative classes for our students. But those classes now are gone. In my case, uh, we've cut a music teacher and, uh, I've had to pick up the load for that.

[05:37:42] Um, it added about a hundred students to my schedule. And, uh, instead of having seven or eight classes a day, I have nine or 10. And, uh, I have three buildings to go to. And on the days I'm in red granite, uh, I have to travel 11 miles in order to do that. So my days are pretty tight.[05:38:00]

[05:38:02] I also wanna discuss about the expansion of charter, of charter schools being virtual entities. The virtual charter schools. I am concerned about our students not being able to develop interpersonal relationship skills with others. When you talk about a business model, most businesses want students who are able to be on time, they're able to work as a team, and they're able to work with others.

[05:38:29] If we in increase the virtual charter charter schools, I'm afraid that our students are not going to be able to develop these skills. Um, I thank you for letting me appear before you today, and if you have any questions, I'd be happy to take them. Think. Kathleen, just to quickly, Mr. Chairman? Yeah, I, I, um, I just wanted to ask you a little bit about kind of where you've been recently.

[05:38:52] You said that you had, it sounded like you just kind of went through a budget crisis in this last year. You said that you were [05:39:00] moving from six to seven classes to nine to 10 classes, and Yes, it's been within the last two years. In the last two years, yes. Uhhuh are you seeing a, a declining enrollment in your area?

[05:39:11] Uh, I don't, I don't have the answer to that question. We, we talk about it a lot, but I, I don't have the answer to that question. You don't actually know the numbers, right? I don't have the numbers today, no. Okay. What, what you described very much is similar to the experience that Senator j and I have in what Northern, he represents northern, I represent Western Wisconsin.

[05:39:29] So I'm thinking that maybe his experience and my experience and your experience are not unique experiences and this really is much bigger than, than just a few schools around the state. Mm-hmm. Thank you very much. Sure. Yeah. Any other questions for Pat? Yes. I just wanna, um, congratulate you about all you do for kids, and you're obviously working as hard as you possibly can.

[05:39:55] Yes. Thank you. Thanks. Pat's a great pitcher, and unfortunately she's [05:40:00] gonna retire. Or yes or not. Yes. Well, we'll, we'll, we'll work, we'll talk about that'll, we'll see, we'll see. Senator Olsson. Okay, sounds good. Let's, well, let's hope not. Senator, if you'd hold out a good thought for me, I'd really appreciate it.

[05:40:12] I got lots of good thoughts for you, my dear. Thank you. You bet. Thanks a lot. Okay. Susan Minter, speaking against, followed by Dr. Robert Morlan, Allison Pratt, Beth Sandell, Rose Fernandez, Lawrence Lowland, and Marjorie Passman.

[05:40:37] I, I'm just thinking maybe the folks that are called, if you just wanna go up to the, the chairs and then when it's, when you, your time is up and I, we don't, I don't care which order you go. We'll just go right down the list because it's four o'clock. Some of these people registered at like 9 22, so you've been here a long time.

[05:40:57] So if, if she mentions your name, just [05:41:00] grab a chair and we will, we want to hear everyone. We want to. I'd say we want to be brief, be fresh, but I think that we're past that stage, so yes, there are people in the other room that might be able to come in because I see a lot of That's true. Yeah. Yeah. I think the pages are taken care of that, but if there is, we'll go.

[05:41:19] Can I just check it out because there lot of, okay. Okay. Anyway, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Susan Mintner. I teach fifth grade in the Menominee Falls Public Schools. I have taught for 38 years here in Wisconsin, 36 of those in Menominee Falls. I'm also serving in my 15th year as a school board member in Grafton.

[05:41:41] My life has been spent in the service to education. Something that is very important to me and something that I'm very honored and proud to be involved with. I am here to express my opposition to Senate Bill 22. This bill encourages privatization of our public education [05:42:00] system. As a school board member, I'm very concerned about local control being taken away from local school boards.

[05:42:08] Much of the success of the Wisconsin's public of Wisconsin's public school system is due to the local control by elected school boards that answer to the local community. These charter schools do not have this accountability as a school board member. I am also concerned that this bill would increase the state's cost to fund independent to our charter schools.

[05:42:32] That would be paid for by a first draw on the general equalization aid, thus reducing each district's general aid. Grafton state aid was reduced by \$91,247 during the current school year. By lifting the limits in numbers of participants, it would be quite possible to see an even. Greater decrease in the state aid to Grafton.

[05:42:57] I am sure the residents of Grafton would not be [05:43:00] pleased to know that provisions in this bill could actually translate into local property tax, into a local property tax increase in an attempt to replace the lost money taking into consideration the prospect of privatization, the loss of local control by school boards and the decrease in state aid when districts are already scrambling to balance their budgets.

[05:43:25] I would urge opposition to Senate Bill 22. Thank you for listening. Thank you very much for your testimony. Is there any questions? If not, thank you. We'll just go right down the line. Good afternoon. I'm Dr. Bob Moreland, representing 21st Century Preparatory School. Um, we are an independent public charter school located in Racine.

[05:43:50] I'd like to express my appreciation and thanks to Senator Olsson and all the members of the Senate Education Committee for allowing me the opportunity to [05:44:00] address you today. First of all, I strongly support the provisions of Senate Bill 22. Today, I speak on behalf of the parents, students, and staff members of 21st Century Preparatory School, where our mission is to prepare diverse students for the full array of life choices, including college and careers.

[05:44:20] We are located in the former Western Publishing Building in Racine. 60% of our students receive free or reduced lunch, and 68% of our students are minority students. In a report that I have here that was presented to the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents on February 10th and 11th, it was noted that we are closing the achievement gap for African American students.

[05:44:46] As with all public schools, we are required to administer the annual Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts exam. In reading, our African American students are achieving above both Racine Unified and the state, [05:45:00] uh, state average in the proficient and advanced categories on the W K C E. In math, our African American students in eighth grade who are preparing to leave us and go to high school are achieving at the proficient and advanced ratings levels, again, above Racine Unified and the state average of special importance in this bill.

[05:45:25] We are currently the only charter school in the state of Wisconsin that has a legislatively imposed enrollment cap. That cap is currently 480 students during the month of February. During the open enrollment period, we had 151 students sign up to come into 21st Century preparatory school, but we'll only be able to enroll a small number of those students because of this cap.

[05:45:52] Senate Bill 22 will eliminate this cap and allow more students seeking a different learning environment to enroll at 21st [05:46:00] Century Prep School. As referenced in this report, and based on our ability to help close the achievement gap for American African American students, I would encourage the committee to support this important bill.

[05:46:14] By adopting this bill, you are offering a greater opportunity for more students where we strive to provide the educational foundation to achieve academic success for all of our students. And I would just before I thank you for allowing me to be here, 20% of our students are students with special needs.

[05:46:33] We do a lottery. We do not select who comes in. We take the lottery and whoever happens to come in, that's who gets admitted to 21st Century Prep. We have kids in wheelchairs, we have autistic children, we have special needs, uh, kids that make up about 20% of our student population. Secondly, I've heard some of the issues about, uh, highly qualified teachers.

[05:46:56] All of our teachers are certified by the Department of Public [05:47:00] Instruction. They're all highly qualified. That is required by our charter with the University of Wisconsin Parkside. And the, a representative from Senator, from Secretary Arne Duncan's office is visiting us because they found out that we're closing the achievement gap with the African American students and it got the secretary's attention and he's sending a representative to visit our school.

[05:47:25] And second, and the last thing I'd like to say is we are an option in Racine Unified School District. We have to prove ourselves every day. If we're not doing a good job, the parents have the option of returning to Racine Unified School District. Our mobility rate is between three and 4%. And with 151 kids on that waiting list, that should be an indication that we're doing something right.

[05:47:50] Thank you very much for your testimony. Is there any questions? Not, we appreciate you being here. Thank you, uh, chair and senators and thank you very much Chair for [05:48:00] moving things along. I've been here now, I think close to eight hours despite the accent you're about. Can you state your name just so we Marjorie Passman.

[05:48:07] Okay. Thank you Marjorie. Despite the accent you're about to hear, I have lived in Wisconsin for the last 40 years. For 25 years. I have taught elementary, middle, and high school. I am now on the Madison School Board. I come to, to you to

ask you to reconsider the charter bill you have before you. To me, the key question is what will happen to public education if this bill passes?

[05:48:33] Let's look at the future. Let's just take the year 2015, which was mentioned before. On one side of the educational spectrum, we will see a mass. Of so-called independent charter schools filled with uncredentialed teachers and staff unrestricted in curriculum and education philosophy. Those not chosen by lottery will return to the dying embers of our public schools that have had essential funding drained from them.

[05:48:58] For private charter [05:49:00] schools, add vouchers to the picture and you will actually have the poor paying for the rich to attend private school. Those in crowded, undefended and underfunded schools will not have their needs met. Crime and poverty will increase, and those needing the most from society will be getting the least.

[05:49:20] In addition, charter schools have not by any means been universally successful. Can you listen please?

[05:49:29] Thank you. Before we go into this, as we did in this bill, we should check the data and check the research, which is just coming in now, just being put together and seen. Charter schools were supposed to be the great panacea of education. They would produce great achievement in higher test scores. Recent studies do not find major gains for students in either voucher or independent charter schools.

[05:49:57] Certainly some were more successful than others, but [05:50:00] by giving a school a charter did not ensure success, not by any means in low income areas. Most achievement results were the same as public schools. Pennsylvania passed a charter law in 1997 and in 2008 the Rand Corporation concluded that any gain for students were the same as public school gains and those who run for profit.

[05:50:25] By the way, none of them performed any better than public schools. In 2009, Philadelphia concluded that privatization of schools had not worked. But I'm not here. Even though it sounds like it. To debunk charter schools, I'm here to tell you what they will do to our public schools. I am here to ask you to save our public schools, keep charters instrumentalities of their local school district, finance them independently and not by preempting the funds for local schools.

[05:50:57] And three, have them judged by the [05:51:00] Department of Public Instruction, an agency whose very existence is what education is all about. While an independently, politically appointed committee will not have the skills or knowledge to determine the validity of a charter's application, our nation was the first to create and support public schools.

[05:51:19] Those leaders of federal and state governments wanted to provide all children with universal access to free education, not through a lottery. But all of them, they wanted to guarantee equal opportunities for all children. They wanted our schools to unify, not separate a diverse population, and they wanted public schools to improve social conditions.

[05:51:40] Our public schools have always been the great equalizer in our society. Their doors have been open to any child, no matter what their needs were. It is the mix of children that created a vibrancy and energy and education that was so crucial to first generation Americans like myself. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[05:51:59] You timed that [05:52:00] perfectly. Sorry you timed that perfectly. Yeah, you did a great job. Is there any questions? You did okay? If not, thank you very much. Thank you for allowing me to speak with you here today. My name is Allison Pratt. I'm here to express my opposition to Senate Bill 22. I do not support this bill because independent charter schools will be run by entities other than school districts.

[05:52:26] They're not operated by school boards elected by the residents of their communities. They're not accountable to local taxpayers. Their instructors are not public employees. Most importantly, they are not required to consider the common good. They only consider what is best for a small group of students independently run.

[05:52:46] Charter schools are paid for by reducing state aid to Wisconsin's public school districts. This will force the already cash starved public schools to further cut existing programs or employees or [05:53:00] increase their locally local property taxes to fund these schools. For 2010, 11, the charter school reduction was 57 million statewide.

[05:53:12] The reduction to my school district in on Alaska, Wisconsin was \$188,794, which can be made up on the backs of the taxpayers. Money is being taken away from the children in my district who have a right to a public school education. According to Article 10, section three of the Constitution of this great state.

[05:53:38] Why deplete resources from traditional public schools at a time when the governor is seeking to reduce revenue for school districts by 1.68 billion over the biennium? This is on top of the cuts that my school district has already made year after year site budgets in all of the district billings [05:54:00] have been cut each year by 15%.

[05:54:02] Children's learning has suffered because the classrooms lack adequate materials, textbooks and technology replacement has not been possible because of the cuts in the capital improvement budget. Children are not learning with quality tools. We have eliminated the elementary Spanish program, the elementary health program.

[05:54:22] We've reduced the cognitive disabilities program. As well as the elementary band and orchestra program positions have been eliminated, including an emotional behavioral disorders teacher, a specific learning disabilities teacher, the school to work coordinator, a health teacher, a social studies teacher, a physical education teacher, three custodians and a halftime secretary.

[05:54:46] The community counts on us to fulfill the mission statement of our school district, which is to ensure, ensure that all students of the district require, [05:55:00] acquire the skills of abilities and attitudes needed to be respectful, responsible, productive citizens in a global society. How do we fulfill that promise when resources will be continually depleting?

[05:55:17] I am a public school teacher in the school district of on Alaska for 28 years. I have taught kindergarten children. I teach children. I help them discover and learn. I keep them safe and happy. I care for them as if they were my own children. I am here to be their voice. These children are loved, valued, and they cannot be here to be a voice to express their needs and the right, their right to a quality public education.

[05:55:50] I have needs in my classroom. I have three children who have IEPs because of speech. I'm trying to get two more into speech, [05:56:00] but let me tell you about some of the children that are regular education children that don't have those IEPs. I have six non-English speaking learners in my class. What will happen to those bright eyed children that have been hearing English for only a couple of years, who struggle to find the words to tell me that they need paper or to name the elephant in the book?

[05:56:24] They cannot find the words. What about the boys in my class who have significant behavioral needs? Will they enter your charter schools when they continually disrupt the dynamics of a classroom or a great interactive lesson when they have outbursts of anger because someone has offended them by laughing or looking at them?

[05:56:46] It is said that charter schools can act as laboratories of reform. I know of successful strategies they're used in my school district, professional learning communities, response to intervention, positive behavioral interventions and [05:57:00] strategy. The school employees in my district have been partners in the design, implementation, and governance of our schools.

[05:57:08] Why are we not using these school districts as a model to help these struggling districts? Through mentoring and collaboration with these districts, struggling school districts can improve by borrowing these strategies that are successful. So that teachers can presently educate our students. Please consider the implications for Wisconsin's children and our public schools if this bill is passed.

[05:57:31] Powerless. Children need powerful friends. Wisconsin's children need you to be their powerful friends. Please vote no on Senate Bill 22. Thank you. Thank you very much. Is there some, any questions? Very much. Thank you for coming and testifying and I can tell the passion. I can tell you're a teacher. Thank you.

[05:57:55] Thank you. Okay, rose, before you speak, I'm just gonna announce a few [05:58:00] more people. Beth Sandell, Lawrence Lowland, Carl Peterson, Carrie Bust, and Jenny Hof Schultz Rose. Good afternoon, senators. My name is Rose Fernandez. I'm from Igo and I'm representing myself today in support of Senate Bill 22. I'm also a director of the National Coalition for Public School Options.

[05:58:28] In that capacity as a parent, I advocate in forums around the country for a rich variety of options within our public school system. Options push our schools towards the excellence our children require options, empower parents to make choices that best serve their child rather than being trapped in school settings that are not working for them.

[05:58:52] Options encourage partnerships between our professional educators and parents that impact learning and teaching powerfully and [05:59:00] significantly options. Free teachers to exercise professional discretion and creativity in new and challenging ways that expand their reach and bring new avenues for professional satisfaction.

[05:59:13] Options can simply make a teacher's job the one they wished for when they first entered a classroom. Options give administrators freedom to innovate and stretch and find the ways to serve children first and best while being accountable. Stewards of taxpayer dollars and academic standards. Most importantly, options move us towards a public education system that is smart enough to educate each and every boy and girl to their highest level of competency.

[05:59:45] So I ask for your support of the measures in this bill that expand chartering authority. Current chartering authorities are too often timid and sluggish in our neediest districts. They are nearly [06:00:00] comatose. Our public school system needs invigoration and challenge and needs them urgently. I am also here as the wife of a career firefighter, an entrepreneur and small business owner, and the mother of five children who are growing up in Wisconsin.

[06:00:16] Our family is finishing our eighth year learning at home through a public school. Our two oldest 18 and 17 year old boys or graduates who've gone on to traditional high school and our youngest three girls who are 12, 11, and nine are current students in one of our statewide charter schools that uses an online curriculum, the Wisconsin Virtual Academy.

[06:00:41] You may know that just three years ago we fought for that school, parents and students along with our state licensed teachers, administrators, and visionary superintendents and school boards, and we won. A number of you were part of that historic bipartisan effort [06:01:00] bringing state teaching statutes into the 21st century to allow what is now just three short years later routine in schools all over our state online instruction.

[06:01:13] At that time, the enrollment cap on virtual schools was imposed with the justification that the state needed to study the quality of the schools before letting more children in. A detailed audit was conducted by the L A B, which demonstrated quality and satisfaction that any public school would envy despite that release over two years ago.

[06:01:34] Now the enrollment cap remains solidly in place. Two summers have gone by with thousands of children waiting for a letter that all too often prove to be too little, too late. Families have gone months with one child in and others still out, only to give up out of frustration with a cumbersome, callous process that reduces boys and girls to numbers on a D P I [06:02:00] list. Rose time's up.

[06:02:03] Do you have it written so that you can give it to us or? Yes, sir. Okay. Thank you. We really appreciate it. Is there any questions? If not, thank you very much. Um, well, we'll wait till Carl talks very much. Go ahead.

[06:02:20] Hi, I am Carrie Breast. I'm speaking on behalf of West Bend School District, which is the 19th largest school district in the state of Wisconsin. West Bend School District does not support Senate Bill 22. The critical issue remains the revenue limits do not and cannot pace with the rate of inflation. As a result of West Bend Schools, Westwood schools will be reducing \$6 million within the 2011 12 budget process.

[06:02:44] A state panel reviewing charter school applications cannot possibly weigh the impact of their decision on the West Bend. Class sizes, loss in programming and loss in opportunities for students and families of West Bend. No charter school should be able to avoid the scrutiny [06:03:00] of local community review when limited resources are already being stretched and local programming to community students being cut.

[06:03:07] You're given control to a panel that the public schools would not would have to go to referendum for and get tax payer permission to do the same exact thing. Per pupil allocations make it appear, excuse me, per pupil allocations make it appear. Districts serve individual children based on an average cost, when in reality the cost for individual children varies significantly.

[06:03:27] Typical elementary education costs are not intensive. However, high school programming with band orchestra, advanced sciences, co-curriculars, athletics are far more expensive. Special education or intervention services impact the budget even higher. The impact of revenue limit changes to our district will result in a \$6 million reduction planning for the July 1st budget.

[06:03:49] In regards to teacher certification, the law does state that the d p I shall promulgate rules for licensure for charter, uh, teachers for dual subject areas. How is this best [06:04:00] for kids? If they were a public school teacher, those teachers, if they wanted to teach multiple subjects, would have to earn multiple licenses.

[06:04:07] The children that remain in public schools are the ones that are paying for this, not the taxpayer. It's not dollars that it's costing 'em, it's education that's costing the public school children. If the legislators wish to plan educational policy in a manner that is responsible to local taxpayers, this legislation will not pass.

[06:04:25] As far as the remainder of the comments that we've heard today, we've all been here and it's all been a very long day. I'd just like to clarify a couple things. West Bend School District is not against charter schools, and it is not against limiting opportunities for students. West Bend School District feels that if you are going to do this and you're saying you wanna do this solely for the purpose of increasing opportunities for children, do it in a manner where it does not harm public school children.

[06:04:49] As far as the local board that we talk about, whether it's the Fitzgeralds or the Democrats or the Assembly or the Senate, whoever's gonna be on this board, why wouldn't that board be elected like the state superintendent and the local school [06:05:00] boards instead of being appointed? Um, if I could just have a moment.

[06:05:04] I know amount of time to call Eric by a couple things. The Senator Grossman said, I don't know what private schools have to do with this, but he stated that Westman School's, um, private school enrollment is between 30 and 50%. That is absolutely incorrect. It is 17% elementary and 6% high schools for those students.

[06:05:20] Also, as far as his health insurance questions, let's go on record. As state as Westman School District is self-funded with a TP of Anthem and our premiums that we pay for our employees are less than the premiums that the state pays for him. And as far as, um, inferior teachers, no, that wasn't Senator Darling that made that comment or called teachers in m p s inferior blame them for failing.

[06:05:41] That was Senator Grossman. So, although Senator Grossman is absent, he's not really here right now. So this is what I, this is what I have to say. And let's go on record. 'cause these are the things that he was on record as just saying, if you can go home at night and you can read a book, especially to your children, if you could provide food and support for your family, if you can hold a job, and [06:06:00] then if you can enjoy your life.

[06:06:01] Thank a teacher. Thank you very much. Is there any questions? Not, thank you. Alright. Do you want to run through, sorry. One more thing. Senator Larsson. Thank you for supporting Wisconsin children. Um, do you wanna run through some names? Sure. Okay. It doesn't look like Beth Sandell is still here. Um, I actually know her.

[06:06:24] I don't see her. Um, Lauren Lowland, Jenny Hof, Shan Stroman, Elizabeth Ringle And Will Gruber. Okay. If you're here, please come to the front. And Carl.

Good afternoon. Senator Olsson, members of the committee. I will abridge my remarks given the time, and it's been a long day for everyone, and I have printed copy of my full remarks to share with the committee.

[06:06:53] My name is Carl Peterson and I'm privileged to serve as Executive Director of Inside School of Wisconsin. [06:07:00] Inside is a full-time accredited diploma granting virtual charter school serving students in grades nine through 12. Inside School of Wisconsin is governed by the Grantsburg School District and the Department of Public Instruction.

[06:07:16] Inside unites expertise in online learning with cutting edge technology to provide a quality educational option for several hundred students throughout the state. We serve many at risk students who are credit deficient, have low GPAs, 17 to 20 years old, and often out of education for more than a year.

[06:07:36] Recently, Inside began providing part-time course offerings for smaller rural Wisconsin schools. It's my pleasure to address this committee, the members of which are certainly dedicated to the educational opportunities to be afforded Wisconsin students. And to share with you how we believe virtual education is an integral part of Wisconsin educational, [06:08:00] present and future.

[06:08:01] I've been involved in secondary education for 18 years as a principal, teacher, coach, and advocate for students. That latter role and advocate for students is my mission and my passion. I have witnessed how students learn in many different ways, how students' skills are honed through a variety of teaching strategies.

[06:08:23] And to be sure how one size does not fit all. My role with Inside is to assure parents and students that another route to an accredited high school diploma is available. And if this is a route they need and choose, we will do everything possible to make that opportunity. One that is easily accessible, seamless, and efficient.

[06:08:46] During my years in education, I have seen students struggle to obtain a high school diploma. However, many of the students succeeded because of a caring parent and or a very dedicated teacher of those who [06:09:00] did not succeed. Often there was just one more setback, one more roadblock, one more hurdle that dissuaded them.

[06:09:07] We ought to be about removing hurdles and not allow any obstacle to hinder the route to educational success. On behalf of Wisconsin families, I would like to address the lifting of the cap on virtual school enrollment. Currently, a cap is set so that only 5,250 students may enroll in virtual schools through the state's open enrollment program.

[06:09:31] This cap discourages families from enrollment because of the uncertainty of whether or not their student may actually be able to enroll. It is a hindrance to students, many who have experienced one hurdle after another trying to turn failure into success. SSB 22 paves the way for educational opportunities for all Wisconsin students.

[06:09:52] It removes the aforementioned cap on virtual enrollment. It addresses the issues from the perspective of the student and family [06:10:00] and not from the interest of other entities in the state. And it projects a viable and needed pathway for Wisconsin students of today and tomorrow. In closing, many of us are familiar with the quotation.

[06:10:12] A hundred years from now, it'll not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in or the kind of car I drove, but what will make a difference is that I was different in the life of a child. This is our time to change and it's our time to make a difference for Wisconsin students. Thank you, Senator.

[06:10:31] Thank you. Carl, is there any questions? Not Thank you for your testimony. I'm sorry. Okay. No, you go ahead. Well, Johnny h I just wanna make sure that I didn't cut in front of somebody, because that That's all right if they're not here. Okay. Why don't you, well, what, um, whyt, you read a few names people in front of me.

[06:10:48] Well, did we call your name? Yes. But like later in the list, so. Oh, that's all right. I called your name because you had to have a small child here, and there is somebody who's upset. So why don't we call her up? Sure. As long as you're willing to wait. [06:11:00] Christine McDonough, do you wanna come up and, yeah. I'd be okay if there was someone with a small child.

[06:11:03] Okay. It's just that, you know, I was, I was probably here before, no, I was here before. Your pages were out front. Okay. And there's been about, you know, 40 people that have testified, but we're taking 'em right in order here. Okay. If somebody that has a small child testifies. Okay. Okay. Just go ahead. I'll take a breather.

[06:11:19] Okay. Hi. Is this on? Okay. Yep. I'm Christine McDonough. And, uh, I'd like to say that, um, I wish I believed that this bill was really about education. I find it very hard to believe that we had a budget bill that stated that we're taking away the state's funding for our schools, and then we're tying the hands of communities by telling them that they cannot raise their taxes in order to support their schools.

[06:11:43] So I don't believe at all that this has anything to do with this, but this is what I have to say about it. As a taxpayer, the state of Wisconsin, I'd like to go on record in opposition to this bill, SB 22. I oppose the appointment of a nine person, uh, um, charter authorizing board. As a [06:12:00] taxpayers, I wanna have input into my local school system and through elected board members, not appointed board members handpicked by politicians.

[06:12:09] I'm very concerned about the, uh, positions in the state that are being replaced, classified positions that are being replaced with executive executives that are handpicked by our governor. Um, I don't think that this is the most qualified way to get the most qualified leaders in our educational system, and we will just be allowing political cronyism to dictate our children's education.

[06:12:32] I have a problem with my tax dollars being controlled by a board appointed by, uh, administration that is, quite frankly, passing legislation that seems to be based on a plan that was developed on a national level and is being pushed in states like Ohio, Michigan, Florida, Pennsylvania, to name a few, not the specific needs of the children of Wisconsin.

[06:12:56] This legislation, like all other pieces of legislation that have [06:13:00] been proposed by the Walker administration, will result in the deterioration of the state of Wisconsin and the further removal of services that taxpayers have agreed to over many years. As a taxpayer, I have voted many times to support my local schools through my property taxes.

[06:13:15] I did not vote to allow outside corporations or any other corporations to have my hard earned tax money for them to have a tax break at the expense of the children of the state of Wisconsin. Good. Thank you very much. Any questions? Not appreciate you being here since eight 30. Um, here we go. Sarah, do you wanna read a few names so we can fill up the chairs again?

[06:13:38] Uh, do people wanna ask me to do 500 things at once? Just this one. Um, okay. Just a second. I'm trying to, let's see.

[06:13:52] Okay, so we, she's not here. I don't think Han Stroman, [06:14:00] Jenny's about to testify. Lawrence Len, Elizabeth Ringle. I don't think he's not here. Pat Debi.

[06:14:13] Okay. Daniel Grego and Ann Lacey. Okay, we'll see if we can fill up a few chairs that way. Go ahead. Okay. Um, good afternoon. I arrived here earlier today with a much different message, and now that I listened to the committee's presentation, uh, I've changed my message a bit. It seems the dialogue and the subsequent bill have come to fruition because people have toured really great charter schools and would like to recognize and reward them by expanding this program.

[06:14:43] I'm here today to tell you there are many high performing public schools in Milwaukee and around the state that are going to suffer as their programs have continually been diminished through defunding. As a public school parent, I would like our schools to have all of the things this [06:15:00] bill lays out for our charters.

[06:15:01] Funding, autonomy, and choice. Families and communities do deserve choices, but this seems to reinvent the wheel. There are schools, students, teachers, and in the case of N p s buildings available, and I believe that there must be solutions out there on how to educate our kids kids better. Let's hear them. I welcome the expertise, ideas, and innovation.

[06:15:27] Bring them as a taxpayer, a parent, a vested resident of Wisconsin. I feel empowered to say Milwaukee and Wisconsin are open for education. I'm a parent who believes every student deserves a high quality education and opportunity, regardless of geography or socioeconomics. I'm here because I fundamentally believe in public education opportunities, one in every neighborhood, a school that is safe and successful.

[06:15:54] In M p s, we offer a variety of choices. We have specialty schools, specialty [06:16:00] curriculums, excuse me, IB Montessori, the language schools. These programs are successful. They should be analyzed and replicated. Our district should not have to be fractured to further charters and further differentiation for change.

[06:16:13] Our state government, local officials, our teachers, administrators, now point to parents as not engaged and not willing to step up. Here are some parents that work for change every day. In M P Ss, the current crisis is not really partisan because everyone and no one wants to work for change. The actual stakeholders in this are our children.

[06:16:37] You as a committee seem motivated to enact change to benefit the students of Wisconsin. I propose you invest your time and energies and fixing the funding formulas for how our state's funds are allocated to our public schools. All public schools, to all public schools, and then hold them all accountable equally, if it is to be tax dollars spent.

[06:16:58] I'm here today to [06:17:00] say that the integrity of our school has been chipped, clipped, and eventually I see it coming slashed because the solutions are not the ones for the actual problems. Thank you. Thank you very much. Uh, We will start down this i this way. Uh, thank you. Um, just called my, my wife's name, pat Dii.

[06:17:23] She had to leave and asked me to speak in her place. My name is Alan Ruff. I'm a historian. I've written a history of Dane County and I'm a graduate, uh, from the history department here at the University of Wisconsin. Senator] you asked earlier today why have teachers become public enemy number one, and you were puzzled by that question.

[06:17:45] That question is part of a larger pattern that we have to understand historically. Again, that's my job, a role for those of us whose popular memory is 15 minutes long to put some some of these things in context. [06:18:00] There's been a concerted effort in this state and in this country to destroy public education fundamentally, the central, a central component of it has been the Harry and Lynn Bradley Foundation centered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, that has funded a number of key foundations and, uh, key think tanks that set about over two decades ago to dismantle public education.

[06:18:29] Not simply and solely, not simply and solely because it cost too much, but because they're anti-democratic. These foundations and these think tanks and their backers have an a contempt for democracy right now. The Bradley Foundation money in from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, went to the Manhattan Foundation in New York City that laid out the first plans for voucher [06:19:00] and charter schools in this country, right?

[06:19:04] You could go back. It's documentable. It's readily available on the internet. Now, it's interesting that we had a set of suits here today who came from the National Association of Charter School, authorizers. Go just now online and see who backs this National Association of Charter School, uh, authorizers, and we find that it is indeed the Walton Family Foundation.

[06:19:30] Walmart, go to online. You could do it right now. Go to the PAVE organization that spoke here earlier today, and we find that that is backed by the Bradley Foundation, right? The whole charter voucher, privatization for-profit agenda, regardless of what they say about their concern for public education, is based upon an assumption about that teachers [06:20:00] cost too much.

[06:20:01] Public schools talk cost too much, and so on. Part of that offensive. It has been to mobilize public support. They've mo they've organized an offensive for two over two decades. That tax, you know, teachers cost too much. That is, they're a burden on the taxpayers. I find it utter, utterly cynical, utterly cynical that there are members, uh, on this panel today who can congratulate individual teachers while still voting for attacks on public education and the wellbeing of public education teachers in this country, in this state.

[06:20:40] One more final thing, I wanna be clear that the panel understands that when someone gets up here and talks about independent or non instrumentality charter schools, that they're talking about public funding that is drawing money from school districts for [06:21:00] independent or non instrumentality charters, which means that those same school boards and those same districts that will fund those schools will not have oversight over those bodies.

[06:21:10] Understand what these people talked about when they say independent or non instrumentality, that they mean no unions, longer hours reduced pay, and a decline in quality education drawn and, and with funds for profit drawn from the public school system, you're being scammed. You're being shammed. If you don't defeat this, shame on You can, can we ask you a question quick?

[06:21:41] Sir? Sir? Just your wife's name was Pat Dii. Okay. And you were I was on the list as well. Much later. Alan, my, my wife had a split. Okay, and your name? Alan Ruff. Okay, well just, just for the record keeping, that's all. Thank you. Afternoon turn. [06:22:00] Good afternoon, almost Good evening. Uh, my name is Anne Lacey and I am a lifelong resident of Madison, a 1976 graduate of Madison West High School, and a parent of two children who are currently students at Madison East High School.

[06:22:14] I am here to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 22 as an involved parent and a supporter of the public schools. I have many concerns about this bill, most of which have been eloquently addressed already today. I would however, like to reiterate a few points which are particular and immediate importance to me.

[06:22:32] We have been told repeatedly that the state of Wisconsin is experiencing a budget crisis and that one way to deal with this crisis is to make government smaller and leaner. Yet here is a bill that proposes the creation of a new and I think unnecessary governmental entity. The charter school authorizing board.

[06:22:51] The members of the proposed charter school authorizing board are to be appointed three a piece by the governor, the Senate Majority Leader and the Speaker of the Assembly, [06:23:00] and of each set of three appointees. The bill clearly states that no more than two may belong to the same political party. This will be then a board for which membership in a political party would seem to be the most important qualification.

[06:23:15] Is this what we want for our public schools as a citizen and a taxpayer? It makes sense to me that the charter school, which is supposed to be a public school, is authorized by the elected school board in the community. It will serve. So a charter school established in Madison where I live, needs to be authorized by the Madison School Board after its organizers have gone through a process that may be slow and even cumbersome, but that allows everyone involved time to learn and to understand, to demonstrate a broad base of support.

[06:23:46] Democracy tends to move slowly. Much is made of the educational innovations that charter schools provide. And I do not doubt that many charter schools do provide educational innovations, as I would argue, [06:24:00] do many traditional schools, including those I and my children have attended here in Madison. I would like to close with a comment about virtual schools in all, but a small number of cases.

[06:24:13] It seems to me dinosaur, though I may be, I was born in 1958, that students learn best in a classroom setting with their peers and a qualified teacher face to face. We may live in an increasingly electronic world where people have many friends whom they wouldn't recognize if they met them on the street.

[06:24:31] But to my mind, nothing takes the place of actual in-person communication, which is why I am here today and why I've been here since I registered at nine 30 this morning, rather than sitting at home in front of my computer, sending you an email message. Thank you for your time. Thank you very much.

[06:24:48] Questions, if not, um, before Dan starts, let's run some names. Okay. Lawrence Lowland. [06:25:00] Elizabeth, Ringo, pat, device Ju, Jude Hardish, Shan

Stroman, John, Megan and John Kerry. If anybody, those people are there, please come up to the microphones. Okay. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Olsson, members of the committee for giving me an opportunity to just say a few words.

[06:25:23] I actually, uh, wrote out some written testimony that I've asked be passed to you. I really only want to address, uh, one issue in SB 22, and that's the provision to, uh, direct the Department of Public Instruction to find ways to offer new and more flexible approaches to teacher licensing. And so, um, that's the part that I support and I'd like to just address that briefly.

[06:25:48] Um, I had, I'm gonna do this very quickly because everybody's been here, I think far too long. So here's the main point. The structure of the old should not be used as the standard to [06:26:00] judge the quality of the new. Okay. And what I mean by that simply is that, uh, and I'm particularly interested in high schools here because the high school structure that we have right now, where it's content-based was designed in 1894 by the Committee of 10.

[06:26:15] And I think the world may have changed slightly since 1894. I think it's changed a lot since I was started in the room here today. So, um, so it's, it's extreme. It's extremely important that we understand that the, um, part of charter schools is to innovate, as many people have said, and that when we have high schools that are trying to innovate, if we have teaching licensing contain, uh, um, lined up with the structure of the old where knowledge was fragmented into bits, and a person could only be a certified teacher if they had a certification in each of these bits.

[06:26:48] New kinds of models will not be able to come forward, particularly small schools, project-based schools. Just a couple of years ago, the, the, um, charter school, the year here in the state of Wisconsin was the Valley New [06:27:00] Charter School in Appleton, Wisconsin has a students in grades seven through 12. It has 64 students enrolled in the school.

[06:27:08] It's chartered by the Appleton Area School District. It's a public school. It has 64 students and four teachers, um, grade seven through 12. If you require the old structure, you'd have to have those four teachers be certified in every single subject area. And so what you're essentially saying is the old structure is just ruling out the possibility of those kinds of innovations.

[06:27:29] So the, the, the aspect of Senate Bill 22 that I'd like you to consider is the idea that the Department of Public Instruction should be thinking about ways that

they can certify teachers in more flexible, more flexibly, so that they can work in more innovative schools. This, this has been tackled in other states.

[06:27:46] Minnesota has done it. I'm sure you can get information about how they've handled the problem. And there is an art to teaching in these new kinds of schools. So that's something that should be considered by the Department of Public Instruction while they're promulgating the rules to have new [06:28:00] kinds of licensing.

[06:28:01] So that's the point that I wanted to make and I'll be glad to answer any questions. Any questions for Dan? Nope. Uh, thank you very much, sir. Okay. Uh, I'm John Kerry. Thanks for giving me the chance to talk. Um, when I am, I'm against this, um, charter school bill. I would call it the Educational Shock Doctrine.

[06:28:26] This proposed method of organizing what are now public schools and would change schools from public to private privatization. This is a throwback to many private schools existing in the past for mainly the wealthy or privileged population. Lesser, uh, lower class people would not even get educations in many cases.

[06:28:50] Um, they were not democratic or offered nothing for education to most people in this state. Furthermore, why [06:29:00] should the taxpayers be expected to pay for education, which has already been proven to be a failed system? The public schools are democratically managed by elected school board members, elected by the people residing within that school district.

[06:29:15] Any way you look at it, the proposed system of charter schools are an undemocratically run form of education. The attempts at removing collective bargaining from the teachers is also an affront against teachers' civil rights. Another negative aspect of the charter schools is the greater ease towards militarizing schools, as has been witnessed happening to previously public schools in the city of Chicago.

[06:29:46] A recent New York Times article showed the enthusiasm of New York's exclusive club of hedge fund managers for investing in charter schools. It is impossible to ignore that in New York. [06:30:00] Hedge funds are at the charter school movement's epicenter. The schools are exactly the kind of investment people in our industry spend our days trying to stumble on.

[06:30:14] Hedge fund manager, uh, Ravenal Boykin Curry noticed this in his, uh, writing in the New York Times. Okay. Uh, where incredible cla uh, cash flows, even if in this case we don't ourselves get any of it. The reference is to the fact that New York state contributors 75 to 90% of the annual amount per student that public schools receive.

[06:30:46] Uh, I urge all of you, uh, legislators to vote this bill down. It's a disaster in the making. Thank you very much. Sure. I just have a quick [06:31:00] question. I'm sorry, sir. I didn't get your name. John Kerry. Okay. I, I was, uh, in preparing for this, um, hearing, I read, uh, a report by the National Education Policy Center, um, by a fellow named Gary Mirin, and he talks about new market tax credits, where banks, equity firms and hedge funds have a 39% federal tax credit if they lend money to build charter schools.

[06:31:30] Are you familiar with that? Um, minimally. Um, I, I just think that having a hedge funds involved in education is a very dangerous thing to be doing. I guess I'm trying to get to the bottom of this, and I wondered if you could tell me just a little bit more about where you got your information and how this, this, um, new market tax credit might be related to, to what you learned.

[06:31:52] Okay. What I, the last part that I gave you came out of, uh, the New York Times. Um, I don't have the [06:32:00] exact issue that it was, but, um, I could get it. That'd be great. If you could find it, that would be great. Yeah, I'd appreciate it, John. Okay. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[06:32:12] Good. Uh, JSON and committee members. My name is John Megan. Uh, thank you for the opportunity to speak and for considering this desperately needed a comprehensive school reform measure. Like non Milwaukee teachers have the ability to build a home or buy a home where they wish parents and children should equally have the ability to build, buy, and create the best possible educational opportunities for the kids.

[06:32:39] And expanding school choice through making it easier to create charter schools is one way to do that. A charter school authorizing board is a great idea. From a government's governance perspective, providing additional charter school authorities allows flexibility for parents that would like to set up a charter school [06:33:00] when the local school board obstructs their ability to do so.

[06:33:04] As a parent of a virtual charter school student, it was troubling and difficult time for our family to wait for a narrowed open enrollment window to

actually open. Thank you for extending the open enrollment window and for considering the removal of the arbitrary open enrollment cap on virtual school students.

[06:33:28] The current cap needlessly causes stress on families and the ability for students and parents to choose where the kids go to school. Lastly, expanding school choice is good for both kids and public schools because it will breed competition. I live in SA County with 55,000 other people. How many non-public or charter schools in SA County are currently able to issue high school diplomas?

[06:33:59] [06:34:00] Zero. How many poor performing traditional public schools have been closed in Wisconsin? This bill calls for the ability to, um, uh, have, have, uh, annual, annual reporting and assessments done on the charter schools. When was the last time a public school was closed because they were non-performing? We have a monopoly.

[06:34:28] And there's no accountability for traditional public schools, please give us a chance and a choice so the kids can have a better, better education. And public schools have a reason to improve. Thank you. Thank you, chair. Senator Chalk. Thank you. And thank you for your testimony. This is the voice of democracy.

[06:34:53] It's really wonderful to see people sitting side by side who have divergent points of view and clearly [06:35:00] expressing them well. I was in my office listening before doing some other constituent work here. Here's the dilemma. Your children are very fortunate. Caring parents want the best as many. Do you recognize that a lot of children who come to school don't come from families that have caring parents, in which the school is the only haven?

[06:35:25] So let me give you a real scenario. Four kids living in a garage subdivided into four rooms without running water, without electricity. A real situation in which when those children go to school, the first order of business for the teacher is to give them clean clothes. The second order is to make sure that they have, they have, uh, uh, a good meal so they can prepare for the day.

[06:35:54] And then the third is to try to help them feel confident in their own lives. So [06:36:00] as parents in that school district take care of their own, who's gonna be left to take care of these kids?

[06:36:10] Is it, I'm sorry. Are you asking me a question? A question? Yeah. It's a question for you because you've talked in terms of parents wanting to make choices

for their kids. Mm-hmm. The real, the real world that you and I live in is not made of Ozzie and Harriet any longer. Thank you for clearing that up, Senator.

[06:36:27] Well, Bob, that's the real world, sir. And therefore, to those kids who don't come from Ozzie and Harriett's household, who's going to take care of them when their parents aren't? I didn't realize, and, and please point it out to me, Senator John, just hold on. That's a really good rhetorical question, but I just don't think that what's, it's a question about, I'm not trying to, yeah, I mean, it's a question of if you see the, the issue in this, the issue here, sir, I don't mean this to single you out.

[06:36:58] I've asked this earlier. The [06:37:00] issue isn't that charter schools are necessarily a bad thing for parents who wanna make those choices for their kids. The question is, what's the consequence to those children who have parents that, that are left? And that's, that's the whole dilemma, sir, that I'd, I'd like to hear some explanation.

[06:37:19] 'cause we know you're committed, not doubting that. The question is, don't we have some obligation to those other children too? Right. And you can answer it if you want to, but that's not your job to, well, I, I would, I, I instead, I would offer a response, uh, to Senator Yelp, to point to the area in the Wisconsin State Constitution that says that a, given your scenario that you provided, that it is the responsibility of the school to provide clothes and food and all of the other sundries that, that you referenced.

[06:37:59] If you [06:38:00] could point that out to me in the Constitution, I would be very happy to take a look at it. But right now, I don't believe it's there, sir. And thank you for coming back from Illinois. Okay. Um, okay. Sarah, we're gonna do a little, I don't recognize Wisconsin in certain cases. Okay. I'm gonna read a number of names.

[06:38:23] They're not here. And then if you're not here, I'm gonna move them into the registering, but not speaking. So Lawrence Lawlen, Elizabeth Ringle, pat De Device. Jude Hardish. Shan Stroman.

[06:38:44] Okay. And now I'm gonna read some new names, patch, and then go ahead and come up if you are here. Patrick Mooney, Steve Arnold, Colin Butler, Michael [06:39:00] Carlson, maybe, uh, Jasmine Allen and John Forrester.

[06:39:21] Okay. Okay, go ahead sir. My name's Patrick Mooney. I'm here to oppose the bill. Um, my perspectives are unique in terms of other speakers. Today we come

to the same conclusion, but for different reasons. My kids moved out the state of Wisconsin, probably that brain, brain drain that we hear so much about.

[06:39:42] They said they were never coming back. Well, they came back. My kids now have six grandkids who are in public schools and are lined up to go to public schools. And their parents want them to go to public schools. So they have the same experience that, that they had when they were in public schools here in Wisconsin.

[06:40:00]

[06:40:00] The other perspective is I'm a very proud M t I retired member, and that speaks for itself. We've heard a lot talk about the \$1.6 billion plus the money that will be removed, uh, with the expansion of the charter program. My kids don't need that. They need all the resources. They can, they can have. I called D P I yesterday.

[06:40:24] And we heard from a couple people from D P I today and I said, how many charter schools are there in Wisconsin? They told me 206. And I said, how many of those charter schools are real schools? They told me, well, maybe 50. Well, what have we been doing for the last 10 or 12 years? We've got charter schools if we are paying for kids to be taught.

[06:40:49] And those schools are not really real schools. I have a lot of respect for some of the charter schools that were here today, but there's no way where there are 200 of them here. No way. Was there 25 of them here? So [06:41:00] what have we been doing? Charter schools are research and development in instruments.

[06:41:04] Where's the research?

[06:41:09] What about the other 150 schools? It's disingenuous to sit here and say, let's expand it when we haven't examined what we've got earlier. The panel seemed to agree that you'd get some more data or information about charter schools and leave no child behind types of kids and I D E A kids. Um, given my own background, I would certainly hope that would, that list would include homeless kids.

[06:41:35] Um, Ms. Darling made a reference to homeless. Well, let's find out how many homeless kids are enrolled in attending from these schools. I think I know the answer. Um, a couple times. Ms. Darley made a reference to the random selection process. If you read the law the way I read it, that only kicks in when the school is a capacity.

[06:41:57] The school can fill itself up to [06:42:00] 99% with whoever they want. And to say it's random is misleading unless you include that the school has to be filled.

[06:42:10] This national organization on, on, um, accountability, who pays for their services. I went to their webpage because I saw their, the reference in the legislation. It's not clear who pays for it other than what Mr. R r had said. The CSA employees are too busy. At least they were when I was working to, to do the accountability.

[06:42:31] Are we gonna contract that out or is our accountability board gonna do that with their 0.02% tax, if you will, on public education? 'cause they're gonna pay for it by taking it out of the, the, the, the educational dollars. That is a, a, a fee increase. It is a tax increase if I've ever seen one to create those nine unelected officials and their staff of three or four or five people.

[06:42:57] If I read, read that right. Three or four or five [06:43:00] people are not gonna be able to evaluate on an annual basis the the charter schools in this state, especially if D P I hasn't been able to do it.

[06:43:11] Um, finally

[06:43:15] somebody from the charter school group made a reference that we're talking about social justice here. Meaning if you believe in social, social justice, you will vote to expand charter. And that's a blatant lie. It's a misconception of what social justice is all about and an insult to lots of us who believe in social justice.

[06:43:36] Thank you. Thank you. Is there any questions? Not. Thank you for your testimony, sir. Chairman Olsson, members of the education Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify here today. I'm Colin Butler from the Town of Ottawa. I'm a member of the Kettle Marine School Board and a director of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards.

[06:43:59] Today, I'm [06:44:00] speaking as a citizen and taxpayer Senator Olsson. You might recall that last week you appeared before a group of, uh, over 300 Wisconsin School Board members, and I asked you the question, what, what would the impact be on local school kids that are, that school boards in Wisconsin are charged to educate of this bill?

[06:44:25] That's under consideration, and I'd like to ask you that same question again today. That's the question that really needs to be answered as, as I've sat here all day long and listened to all of the testimony, it seems that there, there isn't so much opposition to charter schools at a philosophical level as there may be opposition to funding charter schools at the expense of what one lady called traditional public schools.

[06:44:56] And that's really the position I take as well. I I don't have a, [06:45:00] a philosophical problem with charter schools. I don't want the creation of new charter schools to come at the expense of what we can do for kids that are in our traditional public schools. I've grave concerns that passing SB 22, which creates a new state bureaucracy designed to facilitate the chartering of unlimited charter schools across the state, undermines traditional public education in a number of ways.

[06:45:27] Currently, public schools are challenged by revenue limits imposed by the state, reductions in state aid, declining enrollments and entrenched teachers unions with bloated contracts. Adding a new class of charter school located in juxtaposition with our facilities and funded by further reductions to our state aid almost certainly ensures our inevitable failure.

[06:45:53] I'd like to clearly express two specific concerns. First, these new charter schools will be authorized [06:46:00] by an unelected body insulated from public scrutiny, the C S A B. Further, the governing bodies of these charter schools will be self appointing boards, also not directly answerable to Wisconsin citizens.

[06:46:15] And then secondly, I'm a strong proponent of local control of government. All that is happening in Madison currently suggests that control of public education should be taken out of the hands of local elected school boards and placed in the hands of unelected bureaucrats. That's unacceptable. You folks purport to be for more accountability and less government.

[06:46:38] And I'm speaking primarily to the Republicans on this committee. I'm all for that. However, creating a new bureaucracy to take money out of the pockets of local schools in order to hand it to unelected governing bodies, to spend on educating only certain students, doesn't sound equitable or in [06:47:00] line with the basic tenants of the party to which you belong or the citizens you all represent, please consider withdrawing this bill from consideration or amending it so that it doesn't impact traditional schools in such a negative way.

[06:47:14] Thank you for your time today and for all you do for public education. Thank you. Is there any questions, Colin? Thank you very much.

[06:47:26] My name is Jasmine Aller and I am very happy to be here today and I will probably repeat things that have already been said, but I'm so happy to finally be testifying. I don't care. I am proud to live and raise my children and send them to public school in the city of Milwaukee. And these bills will chip away at that pride and damage.

[06:47:44] The middle class lives that my husband and I, along with other milwaukeean have worked hard to build for ourselves. But what is unconscionable about these bills, and I'm really gonna specify 22, along with the governor's severe budget cuts to public education, is that they will close the door to a better [06:48:00] life.

[06:48:00] For so many of Milwaukee's kids who live in poverty, a decent public education is the first chance children have to break the cycle of poverty. And we serve some of the poorest kids in the state. And I wanna make a distinction. I would be willing to say that that charter schools that come from the district are public schools, but charter schools that are referred to as independent or to our charter schools, they are not public schools.

[06:48:25] They are not accountable to the elected school board. They are already siphoning away \$8 million from N P Ss. With the expansion of two R charters, SSB 22 will squeeze our public school system even more. And for what? Is it because two R charters outperform comparable public schools. No, we've already heard testimony, and again, I'll refer to the Stanford study.

[06:48:46] About 85% of charter schools either operate on par or significantly worse across the country than co comparable local public schools. So why are you proposing legislation that will take money away from public [06:49:00] schools in order to fund a charter system that researchers have shown is no better? And in the process you are pitting parents against each other when we all want the same thing, a high quality education for all of our children.

[06:49:13] If you, senators want to make us all happy as parents, you need to figure out a way to educate our children equally, all of them. You need to find a way to fund to our charter schools without diverting funds from public schools, which hurts my child and the rest of our public school classmates. If you have any children, yourselves, senators, you will understand my sense of anger and urgency.

[06:49:37] The children of Milwaukee, including my own, have one shot at their school aged years. One shot to make it do not close the door on them. Senator Darling, you said you wanna see all schools strengthened, but I see nothing in these bills that strengthens N P Ss. I see a lot of things that will hurt N P Ss, and I want you also to know that n p s is not a monolith.

[06:49:58] Charter schools [06:50:00] have not cornered the market on innovation. The school my daughter attends is a dual language school. There are many other innovative schools in our system. It has a wait list. Um, and I also want to reiterate the point that the children themselves, of course, cannot be here today and they cannot vote.

[06:50:19] I really want you to take their needs to heart, as you would those of your own children. Third graders from my daughter's school worked hard to write letters to all of you. I have, um, packets with copies for each of you, and if I could just take a second to read a couple sentences from one of those students, Elijah P, who's eight years old.

[06:50:36] Dear Senators and representatives, please don't let things be unfair. N p s really needs more money so kids can learn more math, get exercise, be creative in art. Read books in the library that are in Spanish and English and sing a lot. Our school needs a lot of help because we won't have many of these things next year.

[06:50:56] We won't have our math teacher leader, our art library, [06:51:00] music or gym. Kids really need these things, even if their kids' parents try to teach them these things at home. It's not the same as if the kids can learn them in school. In art, I've been learning about the rainforest. The forest floor is on the bottom of the rainforest.

[06:51:14] And did you know the top of the rainforest is called the emergent layer? I've also been learning about computers and about Cameroon, which is a country in Africa. My education is really important to me. Please help things be fair. Help our school. Please help n p s. And I want to also let you know that his teacher is one of those teachers that I think you referred to who likes to zip up coats and give hugs, and she baked cookies for everyone today.

[06:51:42] So I have cookies to share with you along with her student's testimony. Finally, I want to know how you can support legislation that limits this child's education and chance at a successful future. Milwaukee's children are my children.

They're your children. They're Wisconsin's children. Okay. [06:52:00] They deserve everything.

[06:52:01] Thank you. Thank you very much for your testimony. Is there any questions? Thank you. Chocolate chip with nuts. Ah, works. You should have been here earlier. I couldn't help it. I am sorry. Well, maybe five o'clock is the right time for cookies. Okay. Yes. Okay. So Steve Arnold, Michael Carlson, if you're here, please come up and then, um, otherwise I'll move you.

[06:52:30] And then also Kristen Ford, Sharon Redinger, and Karen Clark.

[06:52:40] John, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you very much for this opportunity to share some thoughts with you regarding Senate Bill 22 today. My name is John Forrester. I'm director of Government Relations for the School Administrators Alliance. And in that capacity I represent virtually all of the public school administrators in the state of Wisconsin.

[06:52:58] The S.A.A. is strongly [06:53:00] opposed to Senate Bill 22. Um, I have a very lengthy statement, uh, and I dropped it off with a page about seven and a half hours ago, so I hope it made it to all of you. Um, I would like to raise a few questions and concerns about some of the provisions of Senate Bill 22. First of all, regarding the, the C.S.A.B.

[06:53:19] Uh, it may be a minor point, but it was raised earlier by Mr. G that, uh, in the appointment language that, um, the appointment language, um, in my reading suggests that the proponents want both political parties represented. However, it does not make that clear cut here. And, uh, I mean, if that really is the intention, it would seem to me that one way to avoid potential mischief would be to simply provide some appointments to the minority party.

[06:53:51] Um, moving on on the C.S.A.B. as well, um, regarding the funding of the board, um, [06:54:00] will the board and its operations be funded solely by charter school fees, gifts, and grants? And I guess it's, if it's primarily by fees, I think the fiscal bureau suggests that the current model that's in the bill is not gonna work because it's not gonna generate enough money.

[06:54:19] Okay. Um, if it's gonna be gifts and grants and there's already some idea of where these gifts and grants are gonna come from, I think perhaps you all need to know that. Um, and we can make sure that there will ultimately be no conflict of interest type situations. Um, and finally, if it's, if it's not gonna be, if there's not

gonna be enough money there to pay for it, where is it gonna, where is it gonna be paid for?

[06:54:45] How's it gonna be paid for onto the, uh, the issue du jour as it relates to this bill having to do with the funding issue and, um,

[06:54:57] I'm still waiting for somebody to provide some [06:55:00] kind of a realistic projection of new charter schools that, uh, uh, will likely be created under this proposal. Um, and, and, and quite frankly, you know, a lot of us were, a lot of us were talking that if, if, if we came to all of you here in this, my colleagues and I in K 12, and we brought forward a policy proposal, and you asked us, well, how much is this gonna cost?

[06:55:26] And we said, we don't know. We're not sure. I think that we would have a difficult time getting a solid audience with all of you. This is a significant policy change, and I simply cannot believe that the charter school associations that have testified here today don't have a better idea of how many charter schools are going to be created under this, under this.

[06:55:55] And it seems to me that, that if the proponents cannot throw a policy [06:56:00] parameter around their proposal, uh, perhaps this body needs to do that. Um, maybe it is time, um, to, to bring this, this, uh, this, uh, proposal, um, into the same league with all of the other K 12 education, uh, appropriations and, and make the appropriation of some certain appropriation, or at least, you know, give us some stability by saying, you know what, this is the, the maximum number of new charters that can be created in the next two to four years.

[06:56:34] Was that, was that my, my buzzer? Mr. That was your buzzer, Mr. Chairman? Um, I, I'll just, I've got a lot of stuff here, but I just want to end by saying, by saying this, um, we've known each other a long time. We've worked together for a long time. I understand the political calculus that's here, the majority can probably pass a bill if you want to, you can probably pass this bill.

[06:56:57] I'm also quite sure, um, [06:57:00] that your intention is to pass a bill that is politically sustainable. And I think that's important, that fosters the creation of high quality charter schools and certainly does not harm students anywhere in the state of Wisconsin. There, there have been lots of questions raised about this bill today, and I think those questions need to be answered before the bill moves forward.

[06:57:22] And as always, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, the s a a offers to engage in continued conversation regarding this issue. And I thank you very much. Thank you. John Alberta has something. Oh, Alberta. And then thank, thank you very much, John. I look forward to that. We will definitely, um, work with you to make this bill better and thank you very much for that offer.

[06:57:45] Appreciate it. John. Hold on. Senator Vold, I wanted to ask a few questions about some of the other things in your testimony. Um, one of the, one of the provisions in here, That I was curious about and maybe hasn't been [06:58:00] addressed much, but was mentioned by D p I was the immunity from liability, and I noticed that you mentioned it there.

[06:58:08] I I don't know the answer to why it's needed, but if you could just kind of share with me a little bit about your concerns about that and what I know I can't, what potential situations it might create. Yeah. I, I just raised kind of a, a question of, okay, why is this, why is this needed? And the, the thing that I came up with, and I think some other people have mentioned it here today, is, does, does that then remove any incentive, um, to conduct due diligence prior to signing or renewing a contract?

[06:58:41] And I, and I think that that's, that's probably our major concern, um, with that provision of the legislation. Okay. And then you also mentioned the multi-school contracts, and I, I don't know if you've noticed this, but I've been struggling with trying to understand the structure of the [06:59:00] charter school industry, and I think the multi-school contracts are part of that sort of business model, but I can't quite envision how this is all gonna come to play when all of the regulations about charter schools are eliminated.

[06:59:15] Can you help me understand what it is that you see? Well, you know, I, I, I think given I, I took a different tack in the testimony for this legislation simply because I'm not a charter school's expert, and also I think the bill's somewhat complicated, maybe breaking some new ground in some areas. And, and so I, I really am asking some questions about, about some of these provisions.

[06:59:39] Um, really does that multi-school contract, does that, does that mean that one governing board could enter into an agreement with a private for-profit entity to run satellite charter schools all over the state? Mm-hmm. And thus far, and this may be especially true with the virtual schools, is what I was thinking about.

[06:59:58] Yeah. Thus far, I think my, [07:00:00] my, my reading would suggest yes, but I'm not exactly sure about that, which is why I asked the question. Mm-hmm. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Larsson. Did you have a question? Okay, thank you. Um, you alluded to the idea that there's, uh, that the, that, that the legislation doesn't have a cap anymore on the number of schools that can be created, number of students.

[07:00:25] Do you have a projection? I've seen some estimates that you have in your written testimony, but do you have an estimate that's of, of the number of schools that you think will be created or the cuts to funding to these, uh, to the other traditional local schools? Well, I don't have any projection regarding, uh, um, new charter schools that would be created.

[07:00:48] Um, Y you know, about all I had, I had some of the, some of the figures in there about, uh, the, the re-estimate that I believe is in the governor's budget, um, resulting in [07:01:00] an estimated, uh, 21 and a half million dollar reduction in school aids in the 2011 13 biennium. And then, you know, when you, when you add, you know, for every additional thousand students that, that go to independent charters, I mean, that's \$7,775,000 that will be siphoned from the general aid, uh, appropriation and not be distributed out statewide.

[07:01:25] Um, you know, that's a, that's a big concern. And, you know, for a lot of school districts out there that, um, you know, have been 18 years under revenue caps and have been tightening the belt, tighten the belt, you know, some of them have been experiencing severe declining enrollment for a long, long time. Um, it, it just seems to me if they continue to lose students to anything, it is gonna adversely impact their ability to survive and continue providing educational opportunities for the kids in their communities.

[07:01:55] And, um, uh, I'm concerned about that. [07:02:00] Senator. Yeah. Is there any, um, I mean, are there any recommendations that you're giving or ss a a is giving to the administrators statewide if this bill passes, of what to anticipate as they write their next year's budget? Um, no. I, I, uh, I was just focusing on chastising the proponents for not providing a really good estimate now.

[07:02:27] Well, thank you for your honesty, John. As, as were we Yeah, we asked, we asked the fiscal bureau for, for an estimate. We were, we have, uh, their note and that's what they gave us. Okay. Okay. Thank you very much. That's, that's what we usually do, isn't it? John, you go to the fiscal bureau. Thank you. Thank you.

[07:02:44] Sarah. Sarah, oh, oh, excuse me. I'm sorry. Hi, my name is Kristen for, I wanna thank you all for being here, um, and especially the hard work that many of you are doing trying to figure this out. Um, [07:03:00] I'm a Madison resident. I was born here. I'm a fourth generation Wisconsinite. All my relatives who weren't born in Wisconsin, were born in Norway.

[07:03:08] I say that because for the first time ever, the word homeland actually means something to me. Wisconsin is my homeland. Um, I graduated from DeForest High School. I also graduated from the University of Wisconsin and their education program, I was certified as a teacher. I always struggled with this issue of charter schools.

[07:03:30] I student taught in Milwaukee. I had very, I have many progressive peers who have argued. Adamantly against charter schools. Um, and as a young student and as a young teacher, I struggled with this because, uh, the idea of choice and flexibility, uh, is attractive to me. I couldn't quite wrap my brain around the idea of privatizing our public schools that just, I couldn't, it didn't make any sense [07:04:00] to me.

[07:04:00] So the idea that a charter school may be a step towards privatizing didn't make sense to me at that time. So I've grappled with this since I was a student and as a teacher, because I was deeply affected by the problems that exist in our schools, especially as they relate to kids, underserved kids. Um, I am, I'm deeply troubled by racial disparities and economic inequities.

[07:04:25] So again, the arguments that are made for charter schools as a way to respond to these problems have always made it difficult for me to make a decision on charter schools. But when I look at this bill, I see that, um, for some the debate is over, just like Wisconsin is open for business, Wisconsin would like to be open for charter schools, and the state is in charge.

[07:04:57] It is painfully clear to me [07:05:00] because this comes in a package. I cannot look at this bill, isolate it from the rest of what is going on in our, with a state budget. It is painfully clear to me that this is part of a broad agenda, that what may have begun, begun as a, an innovative solution. It may have begun as, uh, an effort by progressives to solve problems in schools.

[07:05:28] It has been hijacked and charter schools are being used as a tool. I can see this clearly. We are defunding public schools. We are limiting localities opportunities to raise money to deal with the state's defunding of schools. We are

funding the voucher programs. So money is being siphoned away from public schools to private schools, and we are ending collective bargaining rights, which would help teachers have decisions in their work environments.

[07:05:58] We're setting public schools up [07:06:00] for failure. This is clear to me.

[07:06:06] I hear so much rhetoric that sounds like, um, rhetoric that I hear around the free trade arguments, expansion, competition, choice, innovation, flexibility, and I keep having flashbacks of the first, uh, presidential, uh, debate that I ever paid attention to where Ross Perot sat on the microphone and he said, I can hear the sound now a big.

[07:06:32] Maybe some people remember that and that was referring to all the jobs that would suddenly be sent south. And I keep having flashbacks of that because I keep seeing money students and teachers leaving our public schools because they're failing. And I'd like everybody to consider the question, what has free trade done for poor people think [07:07:00] Haiti,

[07:07:04] stop. But I do have a question for you and I I do appreciate, uh, your testimony here and I found it, uh, and I, uh, apologize. The chair has stepped out, so, okay. Um, in charge here. Um, I have, I have a question for you 'cause you had me in the beginning and I, I appreciated your initial comments that you actually were somewhat in support of the notion of charter schools, and then all of a sudden it turned into this criticism of everything else that, uh, is not before us.

[07:07:35] And so I guess I would ask you if you don't like, um, the proposal that's before you and you do support charter schools in your idea, in your mind, how would you suggest that it be put forward? Because you, you did, I'd like to clarify. You have misunderstood me. Okay. I have, I have, I [07:08:00] have engaged in the debate on charter schools and I have not, and for a long time I had trouble making up my mind, but because I can see that this, that, that this bill opening the floodgates and making it so much easier for charter schools to exist.

[07:08:21] And it comes along with bills which defund public schools, which take money away from public schools, which remove power from localities. I can see more clearly now what this is about. Okay. I just wanted to clarify. Thank you. Okay. You are aware that bills to expand charter schools have been, uh, put forward long before anything that was done this session, correct?

[07:08:53] I am aware of that. And like I said, I, I have listened to the debate for a long time and I have [07:09:00] listened to proponents and opponents and for a long time, opponents, my progressive peers have warned many, all of us of what this means. That these are, that this is a tool. Okay. And I can see that more clearly now.

[07:09:18] Thank you very much. And for the record, I just want people to make sure that they understand that the move to expand charter schools has been going on for quite some time, and it isn't part of a grand conspiracy that, uh, began with the budget repair bill this session. Madam Chair, I, is it just a better joke, just a brief point.

[07:09:40] There's been a historical move, a historic move in Wisconsin to protect public education for a very long time, and we definitely support that Senator J And this is, uh, an avenue to provide more choices to expand and to improve all schools in the state of Wisconsin. [07:10:00] Madam Chair, can we, can we Is by 750 million.

[07:10:04] Can we call that helping them too? Senator Larsson, this is just, okay. Can we just stand point here if we're gonna do commentary comes from both sides. People. Can I have the, um,

[07:10:23] can I, can I remind people that, you know, we are supposed to keep the decorum in the room and that the more that we applaud and, uh, interject, then the less time there will be for the people. There's a stack of people that still want to talk, so I would ask you to please try to keep that in mind. Thank you.

[07:10:45] Okay. Last call for Kristen Ford and Karin Clark. And then I am going to call some more names. Dr. Mel Poncho, Connor Donogan, [07:11:00] Susan Fox, David LED Bed, and Anne Spires, if any of those people are here Okay. If we could queue up and help. Yeah, we sort of are. We're, we're trying. We're trying.

[07:11:25] Okay. So there have been questions on whether or,

[07:11:35] um, anyway,

[07:11:39] I'm sorry. Um, ladies first. Okay. Um, thank you all for everybody in the room for hanging in here all day. Um, I'm Susan Fox. I live in the city of Manona, where I raised my three children in public schools where I taught for 28 years, and where I now serve as the local school board president of the Manona Grove School District.[07:12:00]

[07:12:00] I'm here to speak personally against SB 22. Um, I also, by the way, speak as one who is supportive of, um, the work by a group of parents and teachers in my district who have worked all year on a charter school grant application that they plan to bring forward to our board next week. Um, Issue. The issue here is really not whether some charter schools may or may not be able to do a better job with some students.

[07:12:25] The issue is the need to do to better serve all kids in our traditional public schools and to develop a better, more equitable funding formula. Schools have been making cuts for years in order to live with revenue limits and, um, I think that the Madison superintendent Dan Rad put it very well when he said this bill effectively piles on to the damage already done by the proposed budget bills.

[07:12:49] The timing for expanding charter schools to this degree couldn't be worse for public education. Um, I support charter schools for innovation. I like the concept, um, of [07:13:00] the r and d component that they can contribute. Interestingly enough, we heard some concern by A D P I speaker that we may actually lose that with this autonomous board, um, that can improve all kinds of schools.

[07:13:13] Um, charters have a role to play, but we already have a sufficient process in place. Um, Senator Mir, you were asking about what, what I would do. We have a bill that allows charter schools, as has been noted, the number of charters in our state, um, is high, and we have a seventh place ranking nationwide. It shows that our current law does work for charters.

[07:13:34] Um, it provides the desired flexibility along with accountability to elected school boards and thus taxpayers to D P I and to their students with the requirement that they use norm reference tests on of student performance as well as the requirement to hire professional teachers certified in their areas of expertise as opposed to the new more general multipurpose licensing directed in this bill.

[07:13:57] Well, someone mentioned flexibility before. We may need [07:14:00] more flexibility, but I sure hope we don't lose the solid requirement for content knowledge for, for particularly secondary level teachers. That's very crucial. Um, because of limited funding, we need to keep the current caps in place, both for enrollment and funding on charters.

[07:14:14] The truth is public charters do take money and resources from traditional public schools. Um, I agree with some of the previous speakers that spoke of a sense of urgency for students now in struggling schools, but I don't think the answer lies in

the proliferation of charters. Charters favor, um, as Senator Jo noted, noted those students whose parents have the wherewithal to get them to the charter schools and they leave the others behind in dismantled schools with fewer resources.

[07:14:40] Talk to the teachers and parents in Chicago about what they learned from Arne Duncan's encouragement of charters there. Ask them how the non-charter public school students are faring in the schools left in the wake. Um, Let's see if I can. SB 22 also attacks local control. The [07:15:00] creation of a statewide independent charter school authorizing board with its ability to overrule decisions of elected school boards is more than poor public policy.

[07:15:08] It's at best an attack on local control, and at worst, unconstitutional under the state constitution. It makes the creation of charter schools potentially politically partisan process and its structure appointing the power of giving the power to appoint the board to the governor, the Senate Majority Leader and Speaker of the Assembly.

[07:15:25] This is a lot of control in the hands of a few people, and there is a token requirement that says that at least, um, one party has to be a member of the different party has to be appointed by each of those people. I do. I heard the buzzer, but I do wanna get to one more thing, which is a few, just a few comments about what works and what doesn't.

[07:15:42] The reason the research shows that charters don't necessarily do so well overall is because the form of governance of a school has nothing to do with its effectiveness. There are good charter schools, bad charter schools, good public, regular schools, and bad ones. What goes on in the schools is what matters.

[07:15:57] It's all about the teaching and the learning. And rather [07:16:00] than drain more resources from traditional public schools, as this bill does, we should be looking for a way to structure a more equitable state funding formula that takes into account poverty, um, which is one of the, the single greatest hindrance to student success.

[07:16:13] I saw the movies, the Lottery, and Waiting for Superman, um, about charter schools. They didn't tell the whole story either about charters or public schools. There are proven ways to improve academic performance in traditional public schools, but reducing resources is not one of them. The use of data from meaningful research based norm reference tests, which measures skill development builds accountability and student success.

[07:16:34] Teachers can work collaboratively to use student performance data in a response to intervention model to develop better teaching strategies to reteach when necessary. These efforts are going on right now in public schools, and they are making a difference. And at Manona Grove, we've been actually a leader in this state and, and involving other schools in that model, including Milwaukee.

[07:16:53] Expansion of charters simply leads to expanded randomization of school improvement, um, and just will do nothing [07:17:00] overall for the good of public schools. I'd also like to give Thank you very much. We Ann Ravi's book on, uh, the Do you have, do you have a, a written I do. I'll send. Okay. Which I thank you very much.

[07:17:10] Yeah. Um, I'm Dave Len. Uh, I'm a resident of the town of West Point and I live in the, uh, Souk Prairie School District. I'm not a teacher. I've worked in private industry all my life. I retired recently. I just wanted to know you, to know who I am so you understand my point of view. I'm speaking as a voter and as a taxpayer and a school district.

[07:17:40] I believe in democracy. I object to this bill in large part because as a taxpayer. In my school district, I can go to my school board members and they need to respond to the needs of our community and our [07:18:00] children. We're putting the authority to run these charter schools to a committee down here in Madison.

[07:18:09] This committee will be dominated by Governor Walker, Senator Fitzgerald, and his other brother, representative Fitzgerald. There is nothing that these guys have done that would make me think that they have the best interests of the students and the population of my school district in mind. That was my only real point I wanted to make today.

[07:18:37] I did wanna remark on Senator Rothman, who's not here right now, who, um, who seemed to want to testify himself a lot, but he said at one point that he was worried about private schools. If a quality charter school were in the [07:19:00] area to compete with it, presumably a quality public school would be in a danger to the private school also.

[07:19:09] But I remind us all that we're responsible for the public schools. We, we can't worry about the private schools right now. Our public schools are under an attack. It's no mystery why public schools have problems right now. Our teachers have been vilified by the government of this state, and the funding for the schools,

which has been chipped at over the years and which has further eroded in this bill, has been decimated in the proposed budget.

[07:19:45] And I think that's the source of the problems and that's the source of the solution. Restore some funding to the public schools and they would be able to deal with these problems better. Thank you very much. Thank you for your testimony.

[07:20:00] McMan, you're next. Great. Uh, my name's Connor Donogan. Uh, first that was great testimony, so I'd like to applaud.

[07:20:08] Um, next, I think, um, someone, it was testified earlier, one of the guys in the suits that the reason that charter schools are as a whole performing poorly in Wisconsin is because of, for lack of a more accurate term, because of the regulations here. Um, Minnesota, Minnesota has been lauded as a great example and they actually mentioned that as well.

[07:20:32] But, and the University of Minnesota just came out with a, some research on charter schools there. And it's, of course, it's the same as it is everywhere else. It's, there's a lot of really poorly performing schools. A number that perform at about the same level as the public schools, and then a couple that are really great.

[07:20:54] So the average is good, but the median school is actually worse.

[07:21:00] Um, there's also argued thing of Kaleem Claire here, that charter schools will be better for people of color and low income people. And that actually, that report also addressed that issue in Minneapolis. They were hoping that would be the case, and it has not been.

[07:21:19] Um, so I'm from Wauwatosa and a lot of people who live in Wauwatosa moved there because the schools are great and it's of course only people who can afford to go there because the schools are well funded from the taxes. Um, if this bill passes, I think we can imagine what will happen in Wauwatosa. Um, they'll lose a little bit of money and that'll hurt the school.

[07:21:55] I don't think there are gonna be too many charter schools there. I don't think anyone is who [07:22:00] came here and, you know, to talk about the charter schools, they're hoping to expand. They're not really looking there. Um, but in Milwaukee, maybe like 15 blocks away from where I live or grew up, those charter schools are gonna proliferate because schools have already been defunded.

[07:22:18] And so what I see happening in the future, if this passes, is that the racial inequality and institutionalized racism and segregation will only become more

entrenched as Wawas schools will be passable and students in Milwaukee will have even further deteriorated schools and will be pushed into crappy charter schools.

[07:22:54] I think an alternative is that is for the state [07:23:00] to fully fund public education. Um, the, the state sofa has been unwilling to intervene in the like profoundly terrible urban economy where they've experiencing depression, level unemployment and hunger that is seriously debil debilitating to students. Uh, um,

[07:23:30] so I think also these proponents have been saying that we can't give up on these kids and we need to offer them a better choice, but they've already given up on public schools, on the public schools that they go to, and that's wrong. That's disgusting. Okay. Thank you very much. Uh, Senator Mir has a question.

[07:23:49] Well, thank you for being here today from WWA Tulsa. Um, which high school did you attend? WWA East. Are you still there? No. Okay. Ha Are you familiar with the charter schools in wwa Tulsa? [07:24:00] Uh, no. No, I'm not. Okay. I, there's a, actually plans for another one as well. I would really encourage you to meet with the superintendent Ertle and, uh, find out about the exciting schools that are very well accepted by the, the community members in Wauwatosa.

[07:24:14] So I would really encourage you to do that. Okay. Thank you. And it was an there on my part, but I think that the point still stands that the impact will be very different on Milwaukee public schools than on Wauwatosa, where they have a, a good public option. Okay. Thank you, sir. Okay. Dr. Mel, Dr. Mel Poncho, Tom Howe, Todd Price.

[07:24:43] Thomas Evans. Wendy Cooper, Barb Muse, Barbara Ingram. Allison Schon, [07:25:00]

[07:25:09] you were first to sit down so you can start, sir. Thank you very much. Uh, this, my name is Todd Price. I ran for the state superintendency a couple years ago on the Green Party. And, uh, I, uh, really enjoy this exercise. Uh, Senator Olsson, it's, it's, and other senators. It's very wonderful to hear, even waiting this long, it's been well worth it to hear the passion that people have about education.

[07:25:34] I wanna say that, um, my university National Lewis University has a campus in Chicago and a campus in Milwaukee. I spend a lot of my time in Chicago and I am really concerned that public education, uh, I don't know how charters have impacted Chicago per se, but there are a lot of charter schools. There are contract

schools, there's performance schools, and there's something called selective enrollment. [07:26:00]

[07:26:00] As a Wisconsinite, I was very surprised to see this, that kids that are in a particular neighborhood sometimes cannot go to the school in their neighborhood. They have to apply for it. And I thought that public education meant that you went to your neighborhood school, but somehow that has evolved under mayoral control.

[07:26:18] There's lots of problems in Chicago. Um, there are also a lot of problems in Ohio with charter schools, and I bring it up, I know this is Wisconsin, but it parallels in Ohio. They passed a charter law in 1998 where it was very loose. It was what poorly constructed, and a around 300 schools overnight were chartered.

[07:26:41] It, you know, one of the persons that was involved said, you know, I used to think that every PT Barnum could come in and get a charter school, but I realized they didn't even have to have a tent. There were people who were chartered that had no building, no plan. [07:27:00] Now, I don't think it's that horrible at this point, but it has cost the state over a half a billion dollars Now, just think about what that money could have done in a state that has been found four times by the Ohio Supreme Court to have an unconstitutional funding formula.

[07:27:22] Now, I visit charter schools. My college, uh, works with charter schools. We actually work with a program. I found it ironic today about talking about residency. We, we want to work with our students, our teacher candidates, with a program called Urban Teacher Residency. It's ironic that we're opening up, you know, this discussion about should the teacher be in the community that she or he teaches in when That's exactly where we are going is trying to get people to go into the communities and get more familiar with the community through urban teacher residency.

[07:27:55] But what I'd like to say, um, is that we have seen [07:28:00] laws in the case of vouchers, in the case of charters emerging from Ohio, and these laws have opened up the flood floodgates there. There are, uh, many schools in Ohio that are, um, falling down, but there are 43 anywheres near 43% of the schools in Ohio that are charter schools that have, have failed to compare even to the average public school.

[07:28:25] Many people have referenced, uh, Diane Ravi's book. It's, it's well worth reading. Uh, you know, we have this movie called Waiting for Superman. Why are We Waiting for Superman? Why don't we come together, fix the school Funding

formula, make for better Sustainable schools? Um, I'm not opposed to charter schools, but I must say I'm opposed to this bill because there needs to be more work on this bill.

[07:28:47] And I thank you for this hearing. Thank you. Any questions? Not sir. I'm actually one of the Tom's you mentioned I'm Thomas Evans and Tom Howe I know left, uh, as a friend of mine, [07:29:00] left a few minutes. Okay. Thank you. Um, and I would like to, I guess, uh, second, um, comments you've heard from. Recent speakers that I do really appreciate the opportunity to come in and be part of a spirited, bipartisan conversation about pending legislation.

[07:29:16] I would tell you I'm, I'm approaching 60 years of age next summer, and I have never missed an election since turning of election age in the state of Wisconsin. I'm a lifelong resident, but I would also tell you I've been pretty dispirited the last couple months wondering how much public input there is to, um, pending legislation and decisions.

[07:29:34] So I do thank you for this opportunity to come in and have people be able to express themselves and talk about their concerns. Um, my background, like a former colleague of mine that spoke a short time ago is as an educator and social worker in the Madison School District. I finished a 37 year career there.

[07:29:52] Um, k working K 12, early childhood. Um, I was an alcohol and drug coordinator at Memorial High School for a couple of years. A [07:30:00] position, by the way, I know we're not talking about this today, that's been cut in the current budget here. Not, not because I think alcohol and drug problems are no longer in existence, but, um, that's another issue that would be probably an appropriate conversation.

[07:30:13] Um, my last two years I spent, um, as a, on the field faculty at the University of Wisconsin and actually instructed, uh, school social workers, um, that were preparing to be licensed for, uh, practice in the state of Wisconsin. So I will have some comments about licensure and how that comes about and what we expect of people.

[07:30:31] I took a little offense to a previous speaker who said, um, ref made reference to the fact that things really haven't changed since the 18 hundreds. Oh, contrary, yeah. We expect a lot more in our schools of education for all the professionals that work in schools, and I'll talk about that in just a second.

[07:30:48] Um, my other, um, disclaimer I think I would throw out initially is I'm not categorically opposed to charter schools. And in fact, I would invite you if you question whether the current system, which I would [07:31:00] argue is a pretty good one that we have in the state of Wisconsin by all evidence. Um, if you ever want to go and see some schools, um, we have three in Madison that are functioning very well.

[07:31:12] The Western Mundo was mentioned before, um, right to middle school all within walking distance. So as the weather gets nicer, you can also get some exercise. They would welcome you coming in, visiting and seeing a charter school that functions that's both, um, part of the fabric of the public school system, but is providing innovation.

[07:31:30] Like Dr. Rod mentioned before. The other one that's gonna be opening, um, near the Coliseum in Madison is, is called Badger Rock Middle School that will have an agricultural focus, has a partnership with people from Grow Power from, um, Milwaukee. Wonderful stuff going on with that. All of that done through a rigorous system, uh, with the local school board here.

[07:31:51] In Madison. Um, I also would mention, I, I, um, listened closely as you did to the speaker of the African American, the man that the c e o of the Urban League that [07:32:00] was talking about his struggles in trying to get, um, a charter school going for African American, um, um, young men, which I would agree with him is a, is a concern of ours.

[07:32:11] Um, I don't think we're in disagreement. I don't agree with his comment that he supports this bill. I don't think that's the way to go. I think, um, and the next time he appears before the Madison School Board, I'll be there listening to what he has to say and hopefully supporting that development of that, because I think that's the best way for if we are going to have charter schools and provide that kind of innovation, that's what we need in the state of Wisconsin.

[07:32:35] And I categorically, um, do oppose a, um, an appointed, um, the, the, the proposal part of this bill, the authorizing board that would be political appointees. That's just plain poor public policy. There's nothing, no other way to explain that. And it's, it's a scary and a horrifying way to go, I think in, in both providing oversight for charter schools and [07:33:00] development.

[07:33:00] And I think when we ask local school boards to plan accordingly, given a tremendous decline in state support, to take away their right to provide oversight

for the development and monitoring of charter schools is just unbelievable to me and I think would be a poor decision. Thank you very much for your testimony, Senator Darling.

[07:33:21] Thank you for your testimony, really app, really appreciate it. And as I mentioned before, we're open to look at the, the governance issue that was based on a model that we've used in the legislature for a lot of different things. So we're, we're very open to having a, a board represented in the way that we'll get the results we're talking about.

[07:33:39] So like to include you on that. And I would, I guess I would just, um, reinforce what earlier speakers said about, I'm a really firm advocate of local control of that, that I think there's a lot to be said. Can I make one other comment too about certification? I'll ask you the question. What about certification?

[07:33:54] And then you can, and I, I know earlier, uh, Senator Darlene, you [07:34:00] failed it. A question about that. I think there is some legitimate confusion about what this bill is saying about certification for charter schools. And part of it is I have a number of articles that I've downloaded. In my free time. One of them that's in the cap times recently suggested that the certification would look at things like work experience rather than teacher training.

[07:34:21] Um, so you should, I'm, I'm suggesting that that's a concern that people, a legitimate concern people have. And in terms of my comment before about what we expect of educators in, in Wisconsin right now is stellar. I have gone to Midwestern conferences with other school social workers. They look at our state as a progressive state and one that really expects a lot.

[07:34:44] I can tell you in social work, you have to do a full year of a supervised placement by a licensed school social worker. You have to do a portfolio evidencing skills that are laid out by D P I of what they expect a school social worker to have. And you have to pass a national [07:35:00] exam, practice exam, praxis again exam, which many educators also have to do.

[07:35:04] So I wouldn't agree that we have low standards for our teachers. I think we have very high standards for our teachers. Okay. Thank you very much. Any other questions? If not, I'm Barbara Ingram. I'm a retired middle school teacher after 34 years of teaching in Wisconsin. I'm very much opposed to, um, SB 22 or the rapid expansion of charter schools in any form, despite the stated goals of reform and innovation that this bill is another.

[07:35:34] And I consider it a huge step towards privatization education. And I don't believe private pro for profit schools are not ever nor ever will be for the common good. However, even if my personal opinion that this dangerous picture for private education is not what's motivating this legislation, I would still oppose this bill based on the research regarding charter schools.

[07:35:57] And it's been stated many times today, so I won't [07:36:00] repeat it, but I would repeat the after the study from Stanford that compared comparable public schools to comparable pri um, charter schools with apples to apples, only 17% of them were superior. And I don't think anybody considers 17% a passing grade.

[07:36:20] Why are we putting money into a failing system? Okay. That is not shown to, um, do any better than the public schools. Um, in the greater percentage. The great majority of them don't do any better than the public schools. So the question is, why are we diverting money from. The public schools for so little benefit, a 17% benefit.

[07:36:46] It's not passing. It's, um, why don't we take this money that we're going to be diverting from public schools and put it into the public schools to fully fund them so that they can have smaller [07:37:00] class sizes, smaller schools that charter schools so often tout as their big advantage. We could have those smaller schools.

[07:37:08] We could, um, use the money to open schools and m p s and lower class sizes there with the buildings that are available. We could use that money in public schools to continue teacher training, maintain the necessary programs, all things that are being cut. Why are we bailing on public schools, which have a proven success record?

[07:37:27] Particularly in Wisconsin, we're trying to fix a problem that isn't a problem and we're diverting public funds to, um, things that have no taxpayer accountability. The way this bill is written, it is not acceptable. I have more to say, but I'll just quit there. Most of it's been said today. Okay. Thank you very much.

[07:37:50] Is there any questions? Um, before we get to them, tell us your name, then we'll know who to read it. My name is Allison Schmeer. Okay. Allison [07:38:00] Schmeer. Okay. So, so then we'll just take a few more and then Bonnie Bruske. Cheryl Brenner. Glenn Schmidt, Jacque Lake. Angie Mcna, McMahon. She was here here earlier.

[07:38:21] Yes. Amy Kraus and Chris Zi. Okay.

[07:38:30] Okay. Okay. My name is Alison Schmeer. I'm a retired, um, public school teacher. Uh, in my capacity as an English teacher and a reading teacher, and also as a person who worked extensively with training teachers, I would like to, um, say that I'm opposed to this bill. Uh, there have been many very smart people here who have had many good reasons why they're also opposed.

[07:38:58] So I, I have abandoned my [07:39:00] original comments, which I have previously submitted. However, I, I do think it is a shame that the current administration has so destroyed the public trust that every point in a bill about education is viewed with ominous intent. Um, I do poise, oppose this bill as much for what is not explained as for what is, um, and Senator Vine hode, I very much appreciate your remarks earlier about is that in the bill?

[07:39:26] I, I certainly appreciate the work that you're all doing to try to make this, uh, a better situation. But I did want to, um, focus my comments and just one, uh, point. Um, the gentleman from the Charter schools organization who spoke with Senator Darlene earlier, said that the charter school teachers would be required to be licensed.

[07:39:46] Um, and I apologize, I have not had an opportunity to read the entire bill, but the summary of the bill says that there will be modification of this and frankly, this could be good, [07:40:00] this could be bad. It depends, um, in its ominous interpretation, it is based on the common belief that anyone can be a teacher.

[07:40:12] This is only a belief by people who have never been in charge of a classroom, um,

[07:40:22] or by those who understand that if teaching is not a licensed profession, then it becomes true that anyone can be a teacher. And also if anyone can do it, you don't have to pay them very much. This lowering of labor costs is a necessary condition for a privatized school to make a profit. And consequently, I am opposed to that, um, modification, whatever that may be.

[07:40:57] However, um, I am not [07:41:00] opposed to new ways of helping teachers become better teachers and of, of finding new ways for teachers to come into the profession. And, um, Senator vma, you'll be happy that I do have a suggestion and here's what my suggestion is. I think that we should, um, take the very best and the brightest college graduates and give them paid intensive mentoring.

[07:41:26] Let them stand behind a master in their profession every day. Let them practice with them every day. Let them be a part of the team, let them study best practice over and over and over, and then after three years of this paid mentoring, let them step into that leadership role and take the field. Yeah, this would be expensive, um, but we also know that this is what works for improving student learning.

[07:41:56] The most important element in education is the teacher. [07:42:00] And this is what makes great teachers better. Uh, the people who are doing this most important work in the world deserve no list. And I might also add that it worked pretty well for Aaron Rogers and he's just an entertainer. Thank you, sir. Mr.

[07:42:18] Chairman. Sure. I thank you. Go ahead. I had a few questions. Follow up questions. Allison. Um, I, I think that some of the ideas that you're mentioning, um, come from Finland. I remember reading a book about the, the, um, yes. Um, innovations in Finland. I'm, I'm afraid I haven't read the entire, um, book, but I have read summaries of why Finland is the, uh, is the country that has the highest scores in the world.

[07:42:47] And it is because they invest in their teachers. Uh, in Finland, they take the top graduates of their school, and those people choose to be teachers because they are supported [07:43:00] not just financially, but because they are paid to improve. They are given the opportunity, oh, I'm sorry I used the wrong. They're given the tools to become better teachers.

[07:43:13] And I think that they deserve no less than to also be given the tools to become the best teachers they can be. Um, someone before was saying that there is an art to teaching in the charter school. I'm sorry, but there is a huge art to teaching in the public school, but it's also a skill, a craft that can be worked on and improved.

[07:43:34] And we know what makes teachers better, but we have to have the commitment and the will to spend the money and give them the support to be better teachers and not just to tell them that if they don't get better scores, they're gonna be fired. I just, if I follow up just a bit, I, I wanted to point out, I have read the bill and I've read it twice, and what you're looking for is on page nine, line six to 11.

[07:44:00]

[07:44:00] And, and what it says is that the department shall promulgate rules establishing, establishing a charter school teaching license that allows the licensee to teach multiple subjects and requires the applicant to just demonstrate

competence in the subjects he or she wishes to teach and provides the applicant several means of doing so.

[07:44:19] So it's gonna be a challenge for the Department of Public Instruction to come up with a rule that does all that and still stays consistent with the, the approach that we use now and in licensing teachers. And, and as far as teacher education, I, I just wanted to mention that I've, um, taught both in the public schools and in at the university level in the public schools.

[07:44:42] All of those teachers were taught through the teacher teacher education system at the university level. They were all taught in their specialty, but they were not taught teaching. And I would say that, um, having worked for a long time with my colleagues in the university setting, I wished that a lot of them had been taught education.[07:45:00]

[07:45:00] Thank you. Thank you all very much for your work, Senator Darling. Yeah, thank you very much. And I agree with you on, on the mentor in the building, the, um, support for teachers. Totally. But I really wanna take just a minute to have our legal counsel and Feld to go over what is in the bill and what isn't on, on teacher qualifications because we have to assume what is in teacher in teacher certification in the original charter school bill.

[07:45:31] And we're not changing that. So she'll tell you first what that is and then what this bill changes, if that's all right with you. Thank you. Well, current law requires that a charter chartering authority ensures that all the teachers have the, um, license or certification from D P I and then the bill requires d p I to promulgate the rules for this, um, new type of license for the charter school teachers.

[07:45:54] It's not changing the first step that they have to have a baccalaureate degree and have to be certified and licensed. They still [07:46:00] Right. There's, well, there's, right, they still have to be licensed or certified by D P I. Mm-hmm. Okay. Thank you. Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you. If not, thank you very much for your testimony.

[07:46:09] And ma'am, we'll just go right down the list or the rule. Senator Olsen and members of the committee go. Could you tell us who your name is first? Oh, my name is Chris Cari. Okay, thanks. And, um, I am a staff member at the university, uh, but I'm here today as a mom and a parent. Um, I'm here to test testify today against this bill.

[07:46:30] Wow. I'm not opposed to charter schools that are managed locally by school districts. But I'm opposed to this legislation because it creates more government bureaucracy. It holds potential for waste and misuse of public funds, and it will likely wreak havoc on our existing public schools. I am the mother of two young children who attend Crestwood Elementary School in the Madison Metropolitan School District.

[07:46:52] I'm a taxpayer and I vote. Our school board members are my elected representatives. I can, and I do review school budgets [07:47:00] and I attend school board meetings. I can provide input into decisions that affect all the kids in my community. Our school board members are able to make well-informed decisions about charter schools based on the needs of our community.

[07:47:11] Because they are part of the community, they can weigh the financial costs of proposed charter schools against the need to ensure that our regular public schools have enough money. Should this bill pass? All this could change. A politically appointed committee will be able to authorize charter schools independently of school boards.

[07:47:30] Charter school contracts will be granted to nonprofit corporations, which will appoint their own governing boards to run the schools. These corporations will be given our tax dollars to fund their schools \$7,775 in public funding per student per year. I'm opposed to handing over these tax dollars to private governing boards.

[07:47:48] None of this bodes well for transparency. Now, you know where I stand as a voter and as a taxpayer, as a mother, I am extremely concerned about what this bill means for my children's education and the future of public [07:48:00] education in Wisconsin. And I just wanna interject here that, um, even though it's kind of breaking the rules, I like to bend rules.

[07:48:05] And I think it is irresponsible to look at this bill without putting it in the context of Governor Walker's budget bill that has been introduced, which will weaken, um, certification requirements for teachers and charter schools, testing requirements for those schools and gut our public schools of funding.

[07:48:20] Um, while Senate Bill 22 makes it much easier to open charter schools, it provides no additional funding for those schools. And it instead drains that funding from our existing public schools that will soon be desperately short on funds. Um, should this bill pass? I fear that in a matter of years, our future will look something like this.

[07:48:38] Parents will vie for coveted spots in the best charter schools. Parents who can afford it will move their kids into private schools. Children who don't have the means to attend private school, who aren't lucky enough to get into a good charter school who have disabilities or behavioral issues that might keep them out of some charter schools whose parents don't speak English, who parents are working three jobs and don't have time to try to apply to charter schools.

[07:48:59] [07:49:00] These kids will remain in a broken public education system and we will deny them the skills they need to lead decent middle class lives. Um, I have seen this future. I grew up in Los Angeles and I was 11 years old when Proposition 13 passed there. We had good schools before Prop 13, 30 years later, LA has some of the absolute worst schools in the us.

[07:49:20] Um, one single piece of legislation can destroy a public education system for a long time. And for that reason, our schools are working. Let's not break them. He killed his bell in committee. Thank you. Thank you very much. Is there any questions?

[07:49:40] Hi. Hi, my name is Amy Kraus. This is my son, Atticus Kraus. I'm here as a mother and as a speech therapist who used to work in the forest. Um, this bill concerns me on several levels. One of the most concerning arrange arrangements is that the board that will authorize any of these charter schools are based [07:50:00] on political association versus independent oversight.

[07:50:03] To me, this ultimately will lead to partisan decision making, and that's not beneficial to students, parents, communities at all, or communities at all. Schools should remain locally driven. It is my opinion. Second, as a speech, thank speech language pathologist who used to work with children in the deforest schools.

[07:50:22] And currently I'm a stay at home mom. I know that the research shows that the single best, the single factor that improves student achievement is low student to teacher ratios. It works across the board regardless of socioeconomic status, regardless of language learning status, regardless to the most extent of cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities, learning disabilities, speech and language communication.

[07:50:53] Disabilities, for the most part with, with regard to special [07:51:00] ed, even with special ed, low student to teacher ratios, is what makes students achieve better. The research has been showing this for the last 50 years.

[07:51:13] If through finance funding cuts and having school districts have to pay for charter schools or decreasing their budget through paying for public charter schools, this will further reduce funding available to traditional public schools. And when these funds could be supporting reform within the schools that we know, and we know that this works, it works for almost all the kids, 99% of the kids.

[07:51:41] This is what works and we know it and we've known it for a really long time, but it does take money and the money that we're draining from public schools is hurting all the kids regardless of the school district. And I know that the Milwaukee kids, you know, if those kids had student two year ratios that were within [07:52:00] what is suggested, a um, six to 15 student to teacher ratio, those kids would be thriving.

[07:52:10] But it takes money and it takes a commitment. The other thing is that I can connect the dots and the picture that I see is that eventually public schools will become legally sanctioned institutions for kids with special needs because the kids. Because the kids who can will go to the other schools and the kids who can't, will be stuck back into the public education system.

[07:52:35] And already written within this law says that if a child does not, and I don't have the exact wording 'cause I don't have the law in front of me or the bill in front of me, but it says something to the effect of if the child does not perform at a level that they want them to, or, or has a behavior that's inappropriate, they can send them and they're just not rectified within five days, they can send them back to the public schools.

[07:52:59] [07:53:00] And to me that's really disturbing because it's, it's problematic for those kids with behavioral needs, um, or behavioral disabilities or with, um, communication problems who can't, um, who may not be able to be successful under those kinds of situations. Now with regard to the gentleman from the Urban League who suggested that, um, that this, the African American males are not performing well here in Madison, and I can't speak to what the numbers would be in Milwaukee, but I imagine it's a similar situation that, um, the research suggests that the primary reason for incarceration is illiteracy.

[07:53:39] Most of the people in our prisons are illiterate. And the single biggest factors affecting literacy rates are one level of education of the mother student to teacher ratios. Mm-hmm. And fluency in language. Being taught to read in [07:54:00] student students teach you ratios. That's all we have to do.

[07:54:06] And that's where I'm gonna end. Thank, thank you very much. Appreciate is there any questions? Thank you for letting me speak and, um, I hope that I appreciate your body being open to that information. Thank you very much. Hello, my name is Glenn Schmidt. I'm a retired special education teacher from Sun Prairie and I'm speaking against Bill now.

[07:54:27] I brought with me today this book from Diane Ravitch, who's been mentioned many, many times today. But I'm gonna make a better offer than anybody else did. After I'm done using it as a prop here, I would be delighted to give it to any of you. And Senator Vine Out is looking at it and I have it. I got home, I I have it.

[07:54:46] Leave it here. I have it. And have you look at it. And, because the reason we're all referencing her. Is because she has probably more credibility on this topic than anybody else out there. Um, if, if you know, or if you don't know, she was [07:55:00] the Assistant Secretary of Education under the first George Bush, and she helped shape many of the policies that came to represent education reform in the past 20 years, including charter schools.

[07:55:11] Now, she renounced her previous support for the simple reason that the reforms didn't work. Charter schools performed no better than public schools and served to drain away much needed funding from them. However, if you still believe that they're a good thing, I'm asking you not to make the issue even more political than it is now.

[07:55:30] This proposal would take charter schools out of the hands of elected school boards and community members and put them in the hands of an unelected panel in Madison. Now, who knows best about what Sun Prairie or West Bend or River Hills needs to educate their kids? Do you really believe a panel of nine politicians in Madison does?

[07:55:49] And are you going back home to tell the citizens who vote? That very thing? Good luck with that. I'm also concerned about your proposal, uh, to lower the standards. Now, I've [07:56:00] heard, uh, much debate going on about that, and, and I understand, uh, and I do appreciate, especially Senator Darling, your, um, willingness, uh, to, uh, take some of these ideas and maybe shape them a little bit.

[07:56:12] And I guess on this topic, I would urge you to look closely at that language because it still looks to me like there's an opportunity to take standards that we have

for regular school teachers and make them significantly different and presumably lower. So if you could take a look at Absolutely, I would appreciate that.

[07:56:30] Finally, um, oh, one, one other thing about Finland Senator ot, um, I, I strongly encourage you to keep going in that direction of looking at Finland because so many of the things, uh, in the directions that we're heading in right now is the exact opposite direction of Finland. And, and they are, uh, doing, uh, one heck of a job, one just on a sidelight.

[07:56:49] Uh, they, they gave up standardized testing, uh, about, uh, 10 or 20 years ago. And the only time they ever do standardized testing is when the PISA folks come in, uh, and do the [07:57:00] international testing, and then they blow it through the roof. So it's, it's a real interesting and a different way of looking at it than we do.

[07:57:06] Finally, children can't vote. It's up to you people in your position to stand up to them and take care of them. Um, if you add this bill to the one that takes \$800 million away from their education, it's certainly looks like it. Children have become a very low priority in Wisconsin. I urge you to defeat this bill.

[07:57:27] Thank you. Is there any questions? What's your name? Got it, Angie. Just a second. I'm gonna call a few more names. Thank you. Rosalia Harris, John Whitcomb, Chris Thi, Laura Godfrey.

[07:57:51] Donna Vu Selva, Lori Powell, Dr. Lawrence Hoffman. [07:58:00]

[07:58:01] Okay, go ahead. Hi there. Once again, my name is Angela McMannon of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and I wanna thank you for waiting about five hours to hear me speak again. Um, I think at this point many folks in the room can agree that not all charter schools are bad. Just as not all public schools are bad. I think, uh, there can be no room for confusion in this room.

[07:58:21] However, uh, when we talk about how SB 22 is going to fund charter schools, it will do it directly on the backs of Wisconsin public school children. And it will do that by a draw from General School aid. The gentleman who presented with, uh, Senator Darling earlier this afternoon said something like that will be, you know, one to 2% in the next biennium.

[07:58:41] Well, 1% in Milwaukee public schools of our general school aid is \$8 million. I can tell you what that means to my kids. They've never had a gym teacher,

they've never had a music teacher in their Milwaukee public school. Next year it will mean they will not have a librarian in the State's best elementary library in Spanish and in [07:59:00] English.

[07:59:00] Um, and I guess my primary concern, addition to how these schools are funded and what they take away from kids all across the state who are getting education funding taken away from them by several large pieces of legislation, is that nobody can tell me what SSB 22 does to protect and to reward public schools that already are working.

[07:59:20] I wanna tell you about my son who does go to one of only seven, two-way bilingual schools in the state of Wisconsin. He goes to Franey. I don't speak any other language besides English. My husband speaks Hindi, a language from India. My six year old son is speaking Spanish and English beautifully because he thrives in a SAGE classroom with a one to 16 student teacher ratio.

[07:59:42] Governor Walker's budget proposal means there will be no money for SAGE next year. I don't believe it will happen in any school district, but, um, you're welcome to correct me. Um, what I do wanna say is that his measures my son in a Milwaukee public school that is working with a waiting list. His measures on the measures of [08:00:00] academic progress test have gone up 20 points in both key subject areas in the space of three months.

[08:00:06] He had a 20 point gain in reading from the fall of 2010 to this winter. He had a 20 point gain in mathematics. And again, he's learning in two different languages, one of which he's only been exposed to for about 18 months. I'd call that progress and I would love to hear how SB two two is going to protect and enhance my son's education when he goes to Franey for second grade next year.

[08:00:28] I have another son at Golden Maier School, which is an urban gifted and talented program and was recently a Blue Ribbon Award winner, I wanna say in 2007. I wish it had been more recent. Um, he's learning Chinese. He's on the video club and on the basketball team. And these are programs that are run by M P Ss teachers on their lunch hour.

[08:00:47] Um, I wonder what SSB 22 will do to protect the kids at Golden Maier School who have 10 year old social studies textbooks and, um, and you call that a gifted curriculum? I'm not sure that I do. [08:01:00] Um, so in closing, I think that I

would just like to say that the state hasn't lived up to its commitment to fund two thirds of school costs.

[08:01:14] I understand that. I continue to believe it's still possible for the state of Wisconsin to do that. And I think education is a difficult field. It attracts truly brave people who work incredibly hard for our children. I think this piece of legislation is not brave. And I would challenge all of you please to do the hard thing and the brave thing and fix the education funding formula before you go about creating a new school system that is funded by the dollars taken away from failing school systems that aren't just failing because of teachers.

[08:01:47] They're failing for a variety of reasons, lack of funds. I would put at the very top of that list, and I would ask that you not do this incredibly hard and incredibly brave thing alone. I would ask that you bring together parents who [08:02:00] send their kids to voucher schools, parents who send their kids to charter schools and parents like me who send their kids to public schools.

[08:02:07] We won't make you do this alone. Stop pitting us against each other. Thank you.

[08:02:16] Any questions? Good afternoon. I'm sorry. No, I, I just asked them. I didn't think so. You did a great job. Thanks. Hello, my name is Rosalia Harris. I'm a third grade teacher from Milwaukee Public Schools. I've been teaching in a district since 1994. I'm also a parent of M p s graduates and currently a grandparent, um, of a M P S S fifth grade student.

[08:02:47] And I am the Milwaukee Teacher Education Association Vice President. I am here speaking against Senate Bill 22. [08:03:00] First, I would like to respond to a statement made by Senator Darling stating that charters are public schools. If that is the case, what, what are we here fighting about? Just provide our public schools adequate and fair funding.

[08:03:18] We don't need more school buildings. We talked about that in SB 20. We al already spoke about abandoned buildings. I believe this is a play on words along with that, regarding the license requirements of teachers in this bill. Secondly, expansion of charter schools will divert resources from traditional public schools resources, which are being used for to for best instruction practices.

[08:03:47] We have newly implemented. Uh, C L p. That is our literacy comprehensive project. We are working on teacher evaluation and research

development and [08:04:00] planning on comprehensive math science programs, class size reduction efforts, specialist curriculum such as art, music ed, and other efforts to provide our students with a, with a well-rounded education in areas where they may advance SB 22.

[08:04:23] This bill comes at a time when the biannual budget slashes schools. And with over 800 million to Wisconsin and in Milwaukee alone, 75 million public education is the backbone of our democracy. If it is the wish of this legislation to further privatize public education, governed by independent charter authorizing board with no accountability measures for the board, for students or staff, disconnected from locally elected school boards removed [08:05:00] from taxpayer accountability, you are well on your way away.

[08:05:04] So if parents want to send their kids to a charter because of small class sizes, adequate resources, specialists, music, library arts, they will, those schools will quickly remove students with disciplinary, uh, uh, deficiencies, governance processes, and those who need additional services. However, will you have solved the problem?

[08:05:35] No. You will now have a separate and not equal public system.

[08:05:47] What our students, our kids, our grandkids, want in schools, our adequate resources, specialized services, well trained [08:06:00] teachers and staff licensed certified with ongoing education from accredited higher education institutes, not a six week program trainee. We want schools, teachers, and students performance tested, measured, and evaluated fairly.

[08:06:17] Studies have shown that less than 20% of the charter schools nationally offered a better education. And lastly, this bill gravely harms our students, communities, families and schools by diverting funds and resources from traditional public schools to go into a system that has not shown to better educate.

[08:06:40] If students are at the heart of this, you will reconsider. SSB 22 and focus on fair funding formulas for all Wisconsin schools. Thank you. Thank you. Is there any questions? No. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. My name's John [08:07:00] Whitcomb. I am, uh, I live in Mount Hob. I, uh, actually grew up south of the cheese curtain.

[08:07:05] The first word I learned to spell was a four letter word oleo. Um, but I'm, my, uh, my parents were, uh, economic migrants to Wisconsin. And, uh, I'm glad to

have crossed the border. I, um, I'm really grateful to you guys, uh, for being here. Uh, it's really amazing and I, I want to thank you for the work that you're doing, and I'm proud now to be a Wisconsin citizen, uh, citizen of a state that repeatedly has led the nation in realizing the constitutional injunction to make a more perfect union.

[08:07:46] Now, as legislators, you also serve as educators. What you say and what you do here are models for our children. Now, I would not presume to give you a civics lesson. I myself am [08:08:00] learning a civics lesson right now. I mention this because it's the premise upon which I want to build my argument against this bill.

[08:08:08] My argument is not merely economic, although I prefer living in an economically healthy society. But we believe that a healthy and just economy requires a fair and robust market of goods and services and ideas. Moreover, we believe that such a market has as a prerequisite, a democratic society, which we attempt to preserve and improve through our representative government.

[08:08:40] And through our system of public education, we extract the cost of educating each child, not only from that child's family, but from the community at large. We do this because we believe that a well-educated citizenry is a necessary for effective self rule [08:09:00] and a benefit to each of us. So we have locally elected school boards who are accountable for the allocation of that money.

[08:09:10] It's said, bring up the child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it. Children learn what they see. If a child sees her community lose the democratic control of her education to schools that are chartered by institutions other than their local school board, then not too subtle lesson is that this child is a member of a community, not respected enough to make its own decisions.

[08:09:43] Under such conditions, can we expect this child to become an adult sufficiently empowered to develop the sense of agency required to actively participate in our experiment in [08:10:00] popular self rule? I urge you to reject this bill as it undermines one of the primary objects of primary education. Thomas Jefferson said one of the primary objects is to enable each citizen to know his rights, to exercise size with order and justice.

[08:10:24] Those rights he retains to choose with discretion, the fiduciary of those rights he delegates. And to notice their conduct with diligence, with candor and judgment and in general to observe with intelligence and faithfulness all social relationships. Thank you. Thank you very much. Any questions? Just what do you do for a living?

[08:10:50] Just, oh, I'm a, I'm, I've, I'm a bass player. I've been a bass player in a, in a group called Pipe Road Spring Band. We play all over Wisconsin the last [08:11:00] 30 years. I also, um, teach bass. I play bass, and I, I'm a computer programmer type guy. Thank you. I'm just curious. Okay. I'm just gonna call a few more names before you start.

[08:11:14] Chris David Mande Mande. Laura Mason, Justin Williamson, Tim Shell, Elizabeth McClure, Carol mc mean, and Eric Quist. I'm glad you're pronouncing those tonight. Challenges are phonetics. Mr. Chair, Matt, uh, members of the committee. Thank you again. Chris thi representing Milwaukee Public Schools and, uh, here to, uh, testify against Senate Bill 22.

[08:11:47] Um, uh, a number of questions have been raised today, and I would like to echo Mr. Forrester in saying and, and thank again, Senator Darling, uh, in, in leaving the opportunity open for, um, being able to work with [08:12:00] your office on some of our concerns and just would like to volunteer, uh, our time again as well.

[08:12:05] Um, I wanna hone in here on something that I think is important and, and, and not really, uh, that discovered yet by a lot of school boards across the state. And I was surprised actually to hear that there were some board members here and superintendents who had an understanding because as, as we opened this discussion, there was some confusion about how the program is funded.

[08:12:27] Um, we talked about where the money comes from, does it or does it not come off the backs of, of other students and other systems? And in fact, it does. And I think one of the reasons that it's confusing to people, and just so you know, I distributed a. Piece of information here that you should have, uh, about the Milwaukee, um, city of Milwaukee tax bill.

[08:12:46] Uh, there's just very little transparency in terms of how these particular schools are funded. The two are charter schools that, that we've been talking about. And if I understand this bill correctly, there's not a moment [08:13:00] of consideration at any number of these levels in terms of the financial impact.

[08:13:06] The, the board at the state level can authorize schools, and I think they're gonna be looking at merit, which we've discussed a lot, but they're not discussing. They don't have a moment there where they have to levy attacks. And right now we know the authorizers in the city of Milwaukee, they don't have a moment where they have to consider whether or not they're gonna expand the system.

[08:13:24] And, and they don't have to levy attacks at all or consider funding. And in fact, in a recent conversation preparing for this bill, I had a conversation with a colleague who, who, who has a, a friend who's a member of one of these chartering authorizers. And they were looking at the language and they said, how is, how, how are these schools that, that they were a part of authorizing one of these two Rs?

[08:13:45] Where does that funding come from and does that harm students in m p s? And I explained, well, yes, the funding is taken from, you know, general aid across the state and, and for us that that's to the tune of \$8 million. And then if we don't want harm to come to those [08:14:00] children, we levy that tax. And that information was brought back to the, this conversation and the person they consulted with on the authorizing end said, well, no, it comes from this other pot that of funding that the city of Milwaukee would otherwise not get and know it doesn't harm m p s students.

[08:14:16] That's just false. And I don't necessarily blame that person. I mean, I gave the Department of public instruction a hard time because if you look at your aid worksheet and try to find out what your deduction is, they hide it in two different places. You gotta go find those numbers to begin with, add 'em up, and then you figure out how much aid you're losing.

[08:14:33] So every step of the way here, there's just no transparency until the local school boards have to levy the tax to fill in that hole. And they're taking political heat for levying taxes. They make those considerations carefully when they levy a tax in their community. And they're now being asked to levy an additional tax for a school system of schools, basically, that they have no control over, and that [08:15:00] they're gonna take the blame if once these conversations come up, which they do usually July one and often in December when you get your tax bill about how much you know, why are you taxing us so much, where does this go?

[08:15:12] And just to make that explicit, I wanted to point out for you the columns here. If you look at the, the one as you look at on your left, that's what City of Milwaukee property taxpayers see when they get their bill. And M P Ss is at the top there with a levy of \$293 million. And as I mentioned earlier, 50 million of that amount.

[08:15:31] Actually goes to voucher schools. So you'll see the middle column, and that brings our actual levy for our students down to 243. And then if you look at the column on the fur to this, right, you see the, the, the expense related to the two R charters, which right now is about \$8 million. And if I heard correctly earlier, if we

just push forward and expand this program without considering how we're gonna fund this, if I heard correctly, the population as, as I believe Mr.

[08:15:57] Conta mentioned, he believes in sometime in the near future, [08:16:00] the population of this, these programs will double. That's a six, that's a \$16 million hit just on the two Rs. And we're already looking at, in the near term, another \$16 hit on the vouchers. So the percentage of the amount that my board has to levy and has to have a conversation with its local community about is gonna exceed what is now currently 20% of this total levy.

[08:16:23] It's just, it shouldn't be hidden like this. It people should know what's happening and they should have a clear understanding of, of who needs to pay the bill. And I'd relate it back to the first bill that we had, that the city of Milwaukee wanted to take over the buildings, but they didn't wanna have the financial cost.

[08:16:37] Well, if you want to expand these programs, somebody else, other than local school boards that are having the local control taken away from them should not still have to foot the bill. And I would be happy to, I think it's very important that we work on that, look at that, um, before we expand this and people get a real understanding, not only in Milwaukee, but across the state about how this, how this happens.

[08:16:57] Thank you. Th Sure. Kathleen. [08:17:00] Thank you Senator. Mr. Chairman. I, I've, I've been thinking about what you're talking about and I'm wondering if you have any ideas on how to do that and, and would it be, well, what do you think? Well, I'm, you know, as we've testified earlier, we've had any number of, we've spent a lot of time together.

[08:17:19] I've spent a lot of time in meetings where we talk about trying to fix the overall funding formula for, for students in schools in the state of Wisconsin. And what's happening here is that, you know, we've obviously had an issue in Milwaukee in that the students in the voucher program are not recognized anywhere.

[08:17:35] They're not counted in the equalization aid formula. Uh, and that causes a, a, a, an undue burden on the property taxpayers in our community. Um, and likewise, unless somebody wants to correct me, these two are charter students when they move here, they're not, and they're no longer counted under the equalization aid formula.

[08:17:55] And the equalization aid formula, again, refers back to the state constitution [08:18:00] and what it demands of us in terms of educating our students. So if we move further away from counting students who are receiving public funding, it seems like we're going in the wrong direction. So a simple response would be count them.

[08:18:14] Um, and, and certainly we'd be happy to look into to other avenues beyond that. Senator darling? Yeah, thank you, Chris again. Um, We'll be glad to work with you about transparency. You're absolutely right. People need, the taxpayer needs to know where their dollars are going. And as you acknowledge the constitutional, uh, responsibility is the money follows a child.

[08:18:37] That's how our, our education system is funded. And so, you're right, we have to let people know the state's constitutional responsibility is to, we fund the child and as equitably as possible. And we tried in the last budget, as, you know, to rectify that difference for Milwaukee with the Choice program.

[08:18:57] And it didn't happen for political reasons that I'm not gonna [08:19:00] get in here, but we tried to do that for you and let's, we'll try to do that again, but we have to acknowledge our constitutional responsibility is to fund the child. And so we, and we talk about trans can We're in agreement. Sure. Yeah. We're in agreement.

[08:19:13] So, okay. And I, I agree with you that we need to have the transparency about where the money is going, because a lot of the testimony is centered around this education system, not the child. And it's our constitutional responsibility to fund the child. And that, you know, Howard Fuller was such a eloquent proponent of saying, look, we're not in the business and we shouldn't be in the business.

[08:19:37] And constitutionally, we're not in the business to fund systems. We're in the business to fund children to have the best education possible. I think that's all of our common goal, and we need to work on that together. Thank you. Um, I've been unusually quiet today as you, if you wanna keep that up. Yeah, I, I'm keeping it up for sure.

[08:19:58] 'cause being the chair, I [08:20:00] never that quiet, but, uh, I'll say it right now. Um, we've heard a lot of good testimony today and I just wanted you to know that, um, and I get to decide if this bill goes forward or not. And I have been, you know, looking at this bill, listening to the testimony and even before today, um, this bill's not going forward as it is.

[08:20:20] We are going to be working on this bill to solve some of the problems that, well, not, some of them try to solve as many of these problems as we possibly can because I, I just want folks to know that we are responsible on this panel in this state for all the boys and girls in the state of Wisconsin. And for us to do things that would cause, um, benefits for some kids and problems for other students, a majority of them or taxpayers, um, is, is not the way we need to go down the road.

[08:20:54] So, just so you know, Chris, this isn't a done deal. Um, we're gonna be working [08:21:00] hard to figure out how we can provide more opportunities for kids, but make sure that nobody suffers that that's our job as a state senators, legislators, the state of Wisconsin local folks. So, just so you know that, um, and I.

[08:21:19] Haven't said that. I've been thinking about it all day. 'cause I knew that's where we're we're gonna go, but I just thought that's six 30 at night and, uh, I thought I'd say that before everybody left at the end of the hearing, just so you know. That. Appreciate that very much, Senator. And again, if you know, we could be involved, I'll working.

[08:21:37] That'd be fantastic. Thank you very much. Okay. Is Lorraine Jacobs. Dan Ross Miller Kina Koran. Jeff Feinblatt. Kim Schmidt or Perry Buck here. Please come up

[08:21:55] here.[08:22:00]

[08:22:03] Yep. Your, your name was called Dan. I was just getting a little ribbing. I am, uh, both appearing and squeaking this time. Uh, my name's Dan Ross Miller. I'm, I am, uh, the government relations Director for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards. And, um, Senator Darling, Senator Olsson, I'm at your disposal as we try to improve this.

[08:22:23] We, we'll be calling on you. Okay. Trust me. Um, I first wanna say that the Wisconsin Association of School Boards supports charter schools authorized by public school boards, and we support efforts to ensure that charter schools serve their original intended purpose, which is to foster greater innovation in our public schools for the benefit of all students.

[08:22:45] Charter schools are public schools designed to be freed from regulations in exchange for greater accountability for results. And I think it's important to keep that in mind. We oppose Senate Bill 22 as introduced for a number [08:23:00] of

reasons, including some very strong concerns. You've heard a lot about the funding, um, issues.

[08:23:07] And, um, Senator Aut, you asked about, uh, I can answer this now. If you want to ask me a question, I do have some suggestions as to what could possibly be done. I want to talk about a couple of aspects of the bill that haven't really gotten much attention. Um, one, our provisions in the bill that would allow virtual charter schools established by independent charters to effectively unfairly compete with virtual charter schools that are established by school districts.

[08:23:39] We heard from the Grantsburg, uh, superintendent, and he was, uh, quite happy about the, the cap being lifted on open enrollment. But under this bill, virtual, uh, independent charter schools will be allowed to create virtual charter schools and their payment for students is \$7,775. School [08:24:00] districts that establish virtual charter schools get most of their money from open enrollment transfer payments, which are slightly less than \$6,800.

[08:24:08] So there's almost a thousand dollars difference. Now, I don't know if he realizes this, but if this bill passed in its current form, The incentive for providers that may wanna work with his district is going to be to move to a more profitable venue. And, uh, that's, that's something I think needs to be addressed.

[08:24:27] We're also concerned about provisions in the bill that, um, relate to the governing boards. And I, I'm not exactly sure why this is, but currently there are two ways that you can create a charter school. You can have teachers from the district petition for the, for creation of a charter school or a school board, um, may on its own initiative contract with any person to create a charter school.

[08:24:54] And, um, the school board is involved in that. If they create an [08:25:00] instrumentality charter, the employees of the charter school are employees of the school district. Now, under this proposal, all charter governing boards would preclude any membership by any employee or member of the governing body of the authorizer.

[08:25:17] So that would mean that, um, it, it would mean that teachers who've come to the board and petitioned to create a charter school couldn't be on the governing board. It would mean that the members of the board that authorized this, um, charter school, independent charter, or this, um, excuse, excuse me, uh, school district charter, could not serve on the governing body.

[08:25:42] And it would also mean, uh, that administrators, perhaps the business official from the school district couldn't serve on the governing body. I think that's a serious flaw, uh, that we would like to work on. Uh, finally there, I, I know I'm over my limit here. If I could just say a couple things about the, uh, [08:26:00] charter school, um, um, authorizing board that's created under the bill.

[08:26:07] Uh, several speakers talked about the, the political makeup of that, and it's conceivable that, that, uh, there would be no members of the minority party at all on, on the board. As it's created, it says that no more than two can be members of the same party, but you, you could have, for example, two Republicans appointed and, and a Constitution party member or someone with no party affiliation at all.

[08:26:32] And so I think that members of the minority party may be interested in that. But more, more to the point, this board would be unaccountable in many ways to legislators other than those who make the appointments. Um, the, this, uh, board is not given rulemaking authority. So presumably all of the decisions that it would make would be made on a case by case basis.

[08:26:54] And I think that can lead to some inconsistencies. Um, it would essentially [08:27:00] be free to follow whatever policies it decides to do with no administrative rules that would be subject to legislative oversight and having legislative appointees serve on the board. It does not equate to the same protections that clearinghouse review economic impact statements, public hearings, reports to the legislature and standing committee review of administrative rules provide.

[08:27:22] So that's something. Okay. You would like to, to, we'll be working on those things. Thank you. Is there any questions? For sure, Kathleen, just a quick question and I I, when you said you were referring to me saying that I was asking for some ideas, were you particularly thinking about the transparency issue or other things that you wanted to mention?

[08:27:40] Yes. And right off the top, there are two ideas that come to mind to, to be real blunt about it. The way these independent charter schools are funded is by skimming right off the top of the general aid fund. Mm-hmm. And, uh, there are two ways that you could limit that. I, I think legislators ought to be interested in assessing whether these programs are working and whether [08:28:00] they should be funded at, at a given level.

[08:28:02] One thing to do would be to provide a sum certain appropriation that is separate and apart from the general, uh, school aid formula. That way, uh, this authorizing board might have some guidance as to how many slots it could allocate. Uh, the other thing to do would be just to create a separate appropriation and allow it to continue to be a sum sufficient, but not, uh, that would allow it to be reviewed periodically, and it would still allow as many, uh, charter school slots in the independent charters to be created as, as the board deems fit.

[08:28:38] Mm-hmm. So by skimming off equalized equalized aid, it is the exact opposite of transparency, I think. I think the idea is to create a separate appropriation and not tie it to the general aid appropriation. If, if the, if these programs are worth funding, they should stand up to their own scrutiny, right?

[08:28:55] Mm-hmm. Yeah. Well, what what happens is, you know, it winds up the property taxpayers across [08:29:00] the state wind up picking up the tab for all these Yeah. When there's a skimm if, if the legislature decide. Right. No, I mean, the way, the way it, it's proposed. Yeah, exactly. Okay, very good. Um, I I, if I could, I wanted to kind of clear up one misconception.

[08:29:17] Let me ask you the question. What's your misconception? You wanna clear up? Okay, then we can go ahead. Thank you. Uh, it's been suggested that there, that this board is needed because there isn't an ability to create charter schools around the state. And, and if you look at the fiscal bureau, uh, information paper on this, it's quite clear that an unlimited number of charter schools can be formed in this state.

[08:29:42] And in fact, the school board, if it wants to on its own initiative, could convert all of the district schools to charter schools so long as it provides an alternative for, um, uh, an alternative public school alternative for students who don't want to attend a charter [08:30:00] school. So a district could literally convert itself to a ch, almost a charter district if it, if it wanted to.

[08:30:06] Um, of course it doesn't get the funding. Um, Separately. We continue to get the same funding gets now. Okay. Thank you. I'm sure. I'm glad you cleared that up for us. Okay. Thank you. Um, just how many folks are registered to speak yet? Just to Okay. Um, 'cause we have a whole lot of list and rather than going through lots of names who aren't here, do do it again?

[08:30:29] Once, how many, oh, there's, let's just call 'em Okay. We'll just call 'em, because once we get down toward the end, I think we'll just let people come up. But

we best follow because if you notice we're, uh, letting people speak as, uh, close as possible to the way they, um, signed up. So we're people arriving at 10:41 AM right now?

[08:30:51] Julie Lang, Theresa Lean, mark Saltzman. Laura Matthew, Amy Perry, Katie [08:31:00] Reader, William Albright and Allison Weinberg.

[08:31:11] We've got two takers. Hello. I'm Julie Lang. Okay. I'm amazed at the staying power of everybody. Like, wow. Let's, let's do a few more. Just Okay. You wanna read a couple more? Sure. Just, and we'll, um hmm. Uh, Keeny Drager back maybe. Patricia Delos, Luke Basser, Jamar Meeks, Jamie Domini and David Bowen. Okay. There we go.

[08:31:43] All right. Yep. Thanks for the ready to rock. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I'm a mother of a first grader at, uh, Maryland Avenue, Montessori and m p s Montessori School or a public school. And, um, I do not support this bill. Uh, I think we have charters [08:32:00] and we don't need this bill. We need to lift up our neighborhood schools that we currently have Now, um, if it ends up passing though, I would like you to know my concerns.

[08:32:10] Uh, when creating a charter school authorizing board, I urge you to select the members with extreme caution. I challenge you to elect a board made up of educators, administrators, democrats, Republicans, and leaders from the community who have an invested interest in our children and what schools will be available to them.

[08:32:30] Katie, here, I understand that this is a business opportunity for many people and we need to have decision makers that are invested in our local school communities, making sure the men and women that are running our charter schools will live up to their end of the bargain by creating a quality education for our children.

[08:32:47] They, there have been too many charter schools that have failed. They've failed our children by not providing them a good education in which they could excel. They've failed our community by closing their doors [08:33:00] only after being open for a few years because of bad management. In looking at this bill, what pops into my mind is an image of an absentee landlord buying cheap property, ordering textbooks, and leaving for a nice home in some far off city.

[08:33:13] We need to require that they be present to run this business. Take a moment and think about your families. Would you entrust the education of your children to a person that is not held accountable for their actions? The owners of these charters must be required to run them locally and only one charter should be allowed per organization.

[08:33:35] Our children are not pieces of meat on a conveyor belt waiting to get processed and shipped out. This has to be set up as more than just a business. Our children are individuals that need nurturing care and investment. Um, I know a lot has been talked about the licensing requirements. I wrote this before.

[08:33:55] Everything happens today, but I feel caution is urged. When considering the teacher [08:34:00] licensing requirements at Maryland Avenue Montessori and other successful schools and M P s, they work because its teachers are properly trained and certi certified. I would hesitate to send my child to a school that did not have a highly educated teacher base.

[08:34:16] And why is mediocrity for the sake of saving a dollar? Okay, why is it okay at the expense of our children's education? When you look at these bills, envision your children, what kind of accountability would you like for their education? Then look at the 86,000 children in M P Ss and all the children statewide in public schools.

[08:34:39] What kind of accountability do we owe them? They are our future and without a proper education, they will be a burden on our system and cost us even more when they get sent into the correction facilities. Public schools deserve to thrive, and with more money being poured into creating charters, they will suffer tremendously.[08:35:00]

[08:35:00] Also, study closely how this will affect our special needs children's and how they will be served properly. How about a yearly cap of how many charter schools can open in a certain area? What can that hurt? You're still opening charters, but cautiously as this system has not proven itself successful, are you willing to gamble on our children's lives while you experiment with a new business plan?

[08:35:25] Go slow if you must go with accountability and expectations. Thank you. Good points. Thank you. Any questions? If not, thank you very much. Thank you.

[08:35:40] I don't know if this is on, it's on, uh, my name is Laura Matthew. I live in Milwaukee, so some of my comments will be reflecting on that and some of it will

be reflecting on the state. Uh, I moved here six years ago. Uh, I left a very good job offer for myself and offer also for my husband in Florida. I had, prior to that, been in [08:36:00] Philadelphia.

[08:36:00] So my children have been in Philadelphia public schools for three years. Uh, the Miami Public Schools for one year we were in an A plus school, and I will come here another day and tell you about that. But we fled, uh, and we came here certainly in part because we wanted our children to grow up in a state that had strong civic values.

[08:36:17] And I cannot express to you how heartened I am by this meeting today. And thank you very much, uh, Senator Olsson for the way it's been conducted in Senator Darling, uh, and for all of your staying power 'cause it's just amazing. Um, and the other reason that we came here was for the schools. And we purposely wanted our children's to be in Milwaukee public schools.

[08:36:37] And everyone raises their eyebrows when we say that. Uh, they've been in four schools in the public system. Uh, all non-charter. Although again, I would just reiterate what I've heard many times today. I also don't have any problem with charter schools within the public fold. Uh, and there have been some in Milwaukee that have been very successful and others that I think have had real problems.

[08:36:58] And that is what [08:37:00] one might expect. Uh, I am a little perplexed with other people why we are talking about this bill at this time. Uh, my perception, and I don't think it's just a perception, is that my children's schools are going to suffer even more than they already are going to suffer in the next couple years because of this, if it passes.

[08:37:22] Um, and the things that charter schools are supposed to bring to the table are things that when I speak to my friends in Philadelphia and Miami and my sister and my brother-in-law who teach in Texas where I grew up, uh, and they teach in public schools, they cannot believe. What Milwaukee has, it has successful schools.

[08:37:43] And in Philadelphia, my children had the choice of probably two in the entire city, maybe three elementary schools, that any person who was concerned about their children's education at the elementary level would've been willing to consider sending their children to out of a very [08:38:00] large city. Uh, the high school system was a little better.

[08:38:03] There were maybe three or four, um, but out of a much larger city than Milwaukee. Um, in Milwaukee, I never could consider Montessori for my children everywhere else that's private. I mean, I never even educated myself about it because it was completely outta my reach. It cost \$17,000 a year to go to Montessori school. In Miami, we have Montessori, we have Waldorf, we have dual language, we have gifted and talented, we have arts, uh, we have German immersion, we have French.

[08:38:30] And, and these are working and they're working for many, many children, not just middle class. Lots of working class people, lots of children from poor families as well. And my kids are getting this amazing kind of, um, real experience of the real world. So I'm so grateful for it, and it's been terribly frustrating to watch for six years as every year it gets chipped away and classroom sizes are added and all the things that the people in the [08:39:00] rural districts were talking about for them.

[08:39:02] We don't have physical education. We don't have music anymore. Uh, we don't have foreign language because the English teacher who was asked to double up for three years in her lunch hour to teach Spanish class, uh, change schools. And so then that program was gone. There's just nowhere more to cut and there's just no way that I don't understand why we're having this conversation at this moment, um, when everything else is in such an emergency situation.

[08:39:29] Um, I want to also, uh, add just a few perspectives on. Some of my concerns that this does go through with the charter schools, uh, not just the accountability issue. I'm a little bit concerned, I don't entirely understand the separating that was talked about earlier between non-profit and for-profit management that's being sort of outsourced parts of it.

[08:39:51] Um, I was in Philadelphia and added some schools was brought on board. Uh, you know, it did not work out very well and it was incredibly appealing.

[08:40:00] People that need Edison schools or some kind of answer to their desperate situation, were thrilled to have Edison come in and repaint the buildings and buy textbooks and, but you know, the curriculum and the instruction and the commitment was not there and it didn't work out.

[08:40:18] Uh, I also just wanna say, uh, I would be a little concerned about, uh, the charter, not the charter schools, the, um, virtual schools. Um, now I'm not, I was born in 1967, so maybe I'm not a dinosaur. Uh, but I teach online, I teach history at Marquette University. Uh, I have friends that have gone to virtual high schools.

[08:40:39] Their children have gone to virtual high schools within the public charter system and have a very positive experience. But this is a really trendy thing in education right now. Uh, and there's a lot of for-profit interest in it, and it's extremely unproven. Uh, so I would just encourage whatever does go forward, especially when you're looking at the virtual [08:41:00] schools, to think very carefully and try and gather as much information about it as you can, because I would be a little bit concerned about that.

[08:41:06] And I'm actually not hostile to the idea. Uh, but there's a lot that needs to be asked about it, I think. Thank you. Thank, thank you very much. Is there any Thanks for coming back to Wisconsin. I'm happy to be in Wisconsin. I never thought I'd lived this far north. It's not all bad. No, I'm getting used to it.

[08:41:24] Yeah. Yes, sure. Um, thank you for being here. My daughter lives in, uh, the Miami area and, um, she can't afford to send her kids to private schools. And you know, in her, the area that they live, they don't have neighborhood schools. So she, she, uh, applied for a charter school and, uh, there were like 1500 kids who applied for a kindergarten position for 32.

[08:41:53] And her son was lucky enough to get into that school. So I know what you're talking about in Miami and I know what you're talking [08:42:00] about in Florida and I know we have a lot of good schools here. We're just trying to make them even better and have more choices. Thank you. You're welcome. Welcome. Good evening.

[08:42:11] Yes, it is. Good evening. Uh, I appreciate the opportunity to come for you today. And, uh, my name's Pat Delotz. I'm superintendent for the school district of Kettle Marine. Our district's located in Waukesha County. We're a conservative district. Uh, we have high standards. We serve approximately 4,300 students.

[08:42:31] We are a declining enrollment district, in part because. Our community loves our area. Homes do not turn over as fast as the norm. Our homes hold high value. That value is built on the reputation of our school district five years ago in response to continuing economic challenges, evolving technological advances and changing expectations from businesses in our global society, my school board [08:43:00] set the directive to transform the educational delivery system of our district to better and more efficiently meet the needs of all students.

[08:43:09] That charge has been our quest ever since that time, and we have made progress, but that progress is not due to the support that we've received at the state

level. I come to you today with deep concerns regarding the impact of this legislation, and my mark is for and against this legislation. There are a few things that I think are very important, and I'm very delighted to hear that this isn't a finished product, that we can work a great deal more to, uh, make sure that it does meet the needs of students in the state of Wisconsin.

[08:43:43] Uh, this legislation is very far reaching, and that's part of my concern. It creates a double standard or further exacerbates a double standard. Now that being said, I do support legislation that would lift the cap on virtual school enrollments. CATA more is starting two charter schools [08:44:00] next year, one for arts and performance, and one to advance the development of global leadership.

[08:44:05] And by the way, both of those charter schools meet the, uh, NSA standards that were referenced by earlier speakers. Um, the design for our development of global leadership school requires the flexibility provided through virtual school enrollment in order for our students to work in their communities. So we now fall under that enrollment cap.

[08:44:28] And I have 21 open enrollment students who want to attend our global leadership school next year, but that's all subject to their being able to fit under that cap. So please lift the cap for all virtual schools. Ours is not a traditional school. It does require FaceTime one-to-one interaction on a regular basis, but there is also a need for virtual learning.

[08:44:53] I can't provide that to open enrollment students without being able to fit under that cap. Now, [08:45:00] on the other side, as we look at the work that we've done to try to transform education, I've come to understand that districts with longstanding records of high performance are given less credibility or authority at the state level than groups or organizations that have little or no track record.

[08:45:18] We know that student achievement data on charter schools doesn't demonstrate a, a strong advantage over public schools yet with my district's longstanding and outstanding record of achievement, Yeah, always in the top 90% of student achievement in the state. And that with less than 80 or lowest, 80% lower than 80% of the districts in our spending.

[08:45:42] Okay? So very high achievement, very conservative. I don't have that same flexibility that's afforded to charter schools. When we try to innovate, we can't because of the controls that are put on to local schools. If we're really focused on

improving opportunity for [08:46:00] students in Wisconsin, why do we hold that double standard?

[08:46:03] I'd ask you to level the playing field. And this legislation does not do it. It creates more inequities. Now, I personally support parent choice in education. We have law that allows for that choice. Uh, but as Dan Ross Miller mentioned, there's a big difference when I'm competing with my virtual school, with another virtual school.

[08:46:24] That's a C S A B school, a thousand dollars per student, roughly. That's another inequity that needs to be addressed. I also ask why at this time of extreme economic challenge, you're asking us to make significant reductions. And we will, and we will do that and educate students to the very best of our ability.

[08:46:45] But why? When you're reducing our revenues, are you also reducing the amount of money in state aid to schools through an unnecessary additional state appointed bureaucracy? And I won't go into the details of that because that's been expounded on by other speakers, [08:47:00] but adjust the discrepancies between these C S A B charters, district charters, and public schools with proven track records in order to really transform education.

[08:47:12] I come with a different background. I spent my first 20 years in private sector work. I didn't become a teacher until I was 42. And I understand those laws of private sector. I'm coming to an end. What I don't know is why our state refuses to recognize models that are successful models of public education and eliminate some of the restrictions that make us stay in a track that we'd like to bust out of.

[08:47:40] We talk about the rhetoric of local control, but hands are tied. And if these provisions are really good for charter schools, why aren't they good for schools that have proven track records of high student achievement, I'm really concerned that this legislation bypasses locally [08:48:00] elected school boards and parents in the decision making process.

[08:48:03] It appears to strike at the very core of local control. So I ask you to set policy that levels the playing field so all schools can do that important work of transformation. Don't set up another state appointed bureaucracy at a time when resources are scarce. Don't siphon off additional revenues.

[08:48:23] Address the double standard. Don't create more discrepancies. Please ensure that locally elected school boards that represent the interests of their public

have the autonomy and the authority to transform that same autonomy. That's so important to the charter school people speaking to today. Thank you.

[08:48:44] Thank, thank you very much. And we're working on some of the stuff that you're talking about that Sure. And then, we'll, I, I appreciate a lot what you said, and the one question I had was, you said, when we try to innovate, we [08:49:00] can't because of the limits placed on local schools. I know there's a lot of people waiting to speak, and I, I don't want you to spend a lot of time on it, but I just wonder when I, when you think of limits, are, are you talking about, what are you talking about?

[08:49:11] I would talk about licensing. I would talk about minutes and time. I would talk about physical presence, the state mandates, you know, we just, last legislative session got another mandate on bullying. Well, does bullying happen in charter schools? You know, we have an obligation, again, another discrepancy. Uh, part of our funding is to support transportation.

[08:49:33] We're 90 square miles. Well, big bill, charter schools don't have that expectation. Mm-hmm. There's just too many inequities. And I think that, uh, the need to innovate. I so appreciate your commitment to the children in Wisconsin. The need to innovate our schools has never been stronger, but we have to do it in a way that levels the playing field so that all schools can innovate.

[08:49:57] Well, I think we'd wanna raise the playing field, but [08:50:00] That's all right. Um, I probably said that wrong. No, it's, that's true. Uh, Senator Darling, did you just briefly, I, I applaud you. I, I think it's great that you're doing so well and you have high achievement and you said you're, you're, you're, you're 80% below the average.

[08:50:15] You know, I, I applaud you and I totally agree with you. We need to allow school districts to be innovative, to be transformational, and to do it at the local level. And we are very interested in doing whatever we can to open that up to all schools in, in the Wisconsin. So, please, if you have a group of similar thinking superintendents who wanna work on this initiative, we're very open to that.

[08:50:42] And the sooner we do that, the better. We would love you. I, I just really appreciate your testimony. Thank you, Alberta. I already got it going, but that's, we'll just add another name to the list, so Very good. Hi, am I on? You're up. Um, my name is Jamie Domini and I am, let me give you a little [08:51:00] background about myself and then I'll give you my official capacity for being here.

[08:51:03] Um, I'm, I've taught for 14 years in the public school. Um, I've taught in a private, two private schools, um, three public schools. Um, and I'm currently the project coordinator for Badger Rock Middle School, which is Madison's brand newest charter school. Um, and I feel like it's important, um, to talk a little bit.

[08:51:25] Uh, when I was out in the hall, I actually ran into some other folks and they were like, well, you're here to support the bill, correct? And I said, absolutely not. Um, and as a charter, as a charter school, um, you know, I'm, as the project coordinator, I feel like, um, we had a long road to hoe to get through Madison.

[08:51:44] And in fact, when we proposed this, um, idea two years ago, people told us you'll never get through Madison. Um, and we worked collaboratively with the school board, um, and we really did our homework. We got asked a lot of tough questions and we really [08:52:00] had to grow and to, uh, really put forward a program that I feel pretty proud of, um, in order to meet the needs and concerns of our local school board.

[08:52:09] Um, and so I'm really proud that we are an instrumentality. Um, and for the time being a unionized charter school, um, in the Madison School District, um, that will bring a lot of innovation to, um, to the school. Um, I have repeatedly met with principals with other, um, teachers, with families, and talked about the fact that we are a part of this public system and that we are really excited about that opportunity to bring that innovation district wide.

[08:52:37] Um, I think it is important. Can I stop you just one minute? Yeah, please. It's seven o'clock. Um, and in Flac right now, there's a memorial service going on for, uh, Craig ols. And I would just ask that we just take a moment of silence to remember a man who gave his life in the [08:53:00] line of duty, uh, protecting us.

[08:53:02] So if we could just do that for a second and then we'll let you continue.

[08:53:25] Okay. Thank you very much. Okay. Um, sorry to That's jump in. That's okay. Um, not having written out, I would've had to rewrite my testimony about 50 times. Um, I've learned a lot by sitting here and I actually, I'm sorry, I forgot to say this at the beginning. I really appreciate your stamina, um, for still being here as a teacher.

[08:53:45] I've had to sit through a lot of presentations, um, and it, uh, you're really doing pretty well and you're asking some good questions, so I really appreciate that. Um, I heard a lot of testimony that I think, um, I would love to, uh, was planning to

incorporate, but [08:54:00] I think I'm gonna stick to a couple of different things that I think bear repeating, um, is that this bill does not stand in isolation.

[08:54:07] And I'm a history teacher and I teach my students about context, and this bill is coming and we've heard people talk about it, but I think it's important. Um, we're talking about doing right by kids across Wisconsin. We have an outstanding, we are number two in a/c's. We have an outstanding public school system with some areas that are predominantly hampered by poverty, um, and, uh, years and years and years of underfunding, um, public school.

[08:54:34] And I think that it's important to think about, um, moving this bill forward that takes off, um, that is funded prior to the general aid fund, and I'm not well versed in that, but enough to know that it's not a good thing for all of our kids, and that we're doing that at the same time that we're cutting anywhere.

[08:54:49] And I've heard numbers 700 to a billion and a half dollars to public school funding. And that's just, it's horrific to me to think about moving forward charter schools, um, [08:55:00] and, and proliferating, um, charter schools across the state when we're looking at what we think is supposed to be best for kids. And we're doing this in an air where we're removing that.

[08:55:09] The other piece that I think that's important, the, the three pieces of this is that, so you're removing, uh, a significant chunk of funding. And so when you talk about taking care of all kids, we're, we're just starting off by not doing that. The, the other piece is that there is a significant push, my understanding from your co-chair on the joint finance committee to move the voucher system, um, statewide.

[08:55:31] And that troubles me. So you're moving charter schools forward, um, to rapidly expand charter schools. You are massively defunding the public schools and you're looking at privately subsidizing pri, you know, publicly subsidizing private schools. And that to me is just. Unbeliev, it's inconceivable to sit up there and to say that we care about our kids and that we wanna do everything that we can do for our kids when we're gonna be pulling, pulling, pulling and [08:56:00] privatizing, um, our educational system, and, and I think you heard from a number of different people, but charter schools, these educational management companies are oftentimes not-for-profit.

[08:56:10] Um, they can come in and be sponsored by for-profit companies. I also think it's important to note when you're looking at context, I think that there's a lot of good intention and a goodwill on the part of this, this seven person panel. I think

that your hearts, I hope, are in the right place. I think what we saw in the last three months, um, or the last six weeks, has really made me question what happens.

[08:56:35] You know, as a civics and government teacher, I know that what comes out of committee doesn't necessarily end up what becoming, what becomes law. And so I'm really nervous and really concerned. When we talk about teacher licensing this bill, you talk about addressing some of those issues. The governor's bill, the reason why people are bringing this up is that the governor's talking about eliminating those things.

[08:56:53] That's not it. It may not be happening in this room, but it's there. It's out there. Um, so there's a lot of these [08:57:00] provisions, a lot of things that are happening out there that really do actually impact what's happening in here, even though they're not part of this bill. And so I think it's important, um, like some of the people that talked about before me, that we really do look at the context that we really are careful and that we really are thoughtful about what it is that we're moving forward in these times when resources are scarce, um, is to, you know, when you cut the legs out from underneath the public schools, they can't compete in the same way.

[08:57:28] One last piece, and I'll wait, wait, really, really quick. Really quick. Okay. Really, really quick. So I am, um, recruiting for our charter school, and I can tell you that the neediest parents are the hardest ones to find. And they're not out there banging down my door to get into the school. They're the ones that don't have a phone.

[08:57:45] They don't come to parent meetings, they don't speak English. They don't understand. I'm trying to find them. I'm trying really hard to find them, and they're not, they don't know to find me. And so I know the intention of this bill is to serve the neediest, but the neediest [08:58:00] don't. They don't know how to find this.

[08:58:02] And so I, I just caution you with your good intentions. Okay. Thank you very much. Is there any questions? If not, thank you very much for your testimony. Good. A um, yeah, before you start, we'll go through a few lists. Okay. Okay. Also, there are, in the overflow room that I came out of, there were four or five other people who are on the list.

[08:58:25] And so I believe you might've asked for a show of hands or something before everybody. How many people? Yeah. We'll try to get those in here because needs go get Yeah, I think they can hear it, so Yeah, they can. Yeah. I, yeah. Okay.

Okay. Um, Ann Pooler, Susan O'Leary, Katie Swalwell, Will Williams, Beth Moss and Robert Rao.

[08:58:50] See what happens. See if we've got any takers. Good evening. Good evening. My name's Katie Reader. I'm from the town of Middleton. I'm a self-employed small business owner, [08:59:00] not a teacher, not a member of any of these unions or anything. Um, and I'm here to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 22. I grew up going to the Madison Schools public schools, and my kids went to Middleton Cross Plain School District.

[08:59:15] Um, and forgive me if I get emotional, um, over the past few weeks, I feel like there's been an all out assault on the people of Wisconsin. So this gets to be a little bit hard. Um, I always have been proud of Wisconsin's public school system, proud that I came out of it. And, um, the school system can use some improvement.

[08:59:36] It can use some help. And that's why to me, it makes absolutely no sense to be talking about taking money away from our public schools, our traditional public schools in order to give it to corporations to run charter schools. Um, this bill creates an agency of members appointed by Governor Walker, Senator and Representative, representative Fitzgerald. [09:00:00]

[09:00:00] These are people who I believe have made it obvious that they don't believe in or care about or support public education in Wisconsin. This bill also directs that rules should be established for licensing for charter school teachers. And I know this has been addressed, but I've been here all day and here are my notes.

[09:00:16] So, um, and I, I really don't understand why the requirements for teaching in charter schools should be any different from the requirements currently in place for, for the public teachers. And if there's some, if there are licensing requirements that should be updated, improved, then it should be across the board.

[09:00:36] As far as I can tell. I don't know why it would be any different. I am appalled by the opening of the door for virtual charter schools replacing the individual personal contact that students have with their teachers with computer classes. Being pedaled by corporations does not bode well. One-on-one interaction between teachers and students and [09:01:00] among students will be gone.

[09:01:01] And the personal relationships, those, those teachers who have changed your life, the ones you don't know when it will happen, if it's in kindergarten or third

grade, or seventh or when, but there will be teachers who will inspire you and to be sitting there in front of a computer monitor, there's no way somebody's going to be able to reach through and get you and inspire you to shoot for something higher and to make something better of yourself.

[09:01:30] Um,

[09:01:34] I understand. That the corporations that are behind this, this nationwide push for privatizing schools, and that's where this is going. I understand that they're the ones who will benefit from this. I think they're dumbing down the educational educational system and I think that gives them the opportunity.

[09:01:57] They can shape the curriculum. They'll have more control over it.

[09:02:00] They'll be able to teach about or encourage teaching, not about evolution, but about what kinds of saddles were used on dinosaurs. Not teaching about Thomas Jefferson, but teaching about ish sch Laffy. Instead of helping children develop critical thinking skills and helping to build compassionate reasoning, reasoning individuals who will become our doctors and scientists and writers and legislators.

[09:02:24] These corporations benefit by creating more obedient people who are subservient and who will work for low wages and won't challenge them, who won't speak up and who will out of ignorance vote for people who will continue to perpetuate this failing community and educational model. I'm asking that you support the, the teachers, the children, and the families of Wisconsin by increasing support for the traditional public schools and not by replacing them.

[09:02:53] Thank you. Thank you very much. Any questions? Not appreciate your comments. Thank you, [09:03:00] sir. Yes. Is it on? Yep. I think it is. Try it again. I'm Will Williams. Nope, it's not Will. I'm Will Williams and I'm representing myself on behalf of my 11 great grandkids and four grandkids who graduated from La Folie right here.

[09:03:21] Madison. Uh, Senator Darley spoke of Howard Fuller and I'm aware of who Howard Fuller is and I think he is part of the problem because I've been hearing ever since I've been going to the school board meetings here in Madison since 2002 of how, uh, these teachers is the cause of the achievement gap between African Americans and others.

[09:03:57] And I agree there is a problem, [09:04:00] but no one can convince me that pulling money out of public schools and putting it into a private school, and you may call it a charter school or independent or whatever, but I don't think it will be any different from the school that I've been monitoring in Rogers Park, Illinois.

[09:04:19] Uh, the. So North side of Chicago where they had the same problem. A school that has been in existence for six years now they're squabbling over whether it's a private school or a public school, even though 80% of the funding come from the taxpayers and the district. And that's what we're dealing with here.

[09:04:42] Howard Fuller, as you know, started the B A E O, the Black Alliance for Educational Options, which went and plucked many of the people of the darker hue from the [09:05:00] schools. And most of them are conservatives, I'll even say neo-conservatives. They plucked these people and brought 'em and sent 'em in the community.

[09:05:11] In other words, the foundations did, and Dr. Ross spoke of it early, the Bradley Foundation, the Manhattan Institute, the same institute that brought out the Bell curve was funded by the Bradley Institute, Koch Brothers. Yeah, we've heard that name. Recently had schools in North Carolina recently that were just segregated because of the shenanigans that they pulled to get statues changed.

[09:05:45] So I'm familiar with, with what's going on, and it's like many people have said earlier, this is something that has been planned for a long time to take public education away from the [09:06:00] people and to take the rule from the people. It didn't just start. Milton Friedman said in 1955 that government should not have a monopoly on public education.

[09:06:12] It should be free enterprise. But we know what that means. The free enterprise, it's free for some, but it's entrepreneurship for others. And many of the people that sat here today talk about what these schools are doing, and they're not educators. So it's, it's no way I can say how anyone can say, you can cut this budget when the schools are already strapped and pull money out and give to something that is no more than an experiment.

[09:06:49] Because statistics have shown that these charter schools are not what have been advocated today. And all you have to do is go on the internet and look at it. I'm [09:07:00] ancient, I don't know nothing about the internet, but I can move around Googling and put a name in and find what I want to find. So it's not true.

[09:07:10] I went to hear Diane Ravits lecture. And she hit the point right on the head. She hit the nail on the head. What it is, it's privatization of education is what these charter schools are, what the vouchers intent was, the whole thing. And I don't think it's a game that politicians should play with the future of this country, because I believe the young people are the future of, of the country.

[09:07:42] And I thank you for the time and I hope you consider this and think about it. One other thing I like to say, I wish Senator Grossman was here, but I was up to this capitol every day, you know, [09:08:00] supposedly enjoying the freedoms that I shed blood for in Vietnam. And it sickened me to hear him go on a press release national TV and say to people that were protesting were slob.

[09:08:18] I would see, yeah, I know, I, I've gotta say it. He said it and he left. I, and I feel all the people that were protesting that day and every day that they was there would rather be labeled a slob than be a pig feeding at the trough for billionaires and corporate greed. Thanks. Thank you.

[09:08:46] Okay. I'm gonna read a bunch more names, so if you need to stop clapping to hear your name called Margaret Heath Thomas

[09:08:57] MTM from [09:09:00] Madison, um, Barbara Esti, Kim back, maybe Basic. And Joshua Ray, van Halen and Mindy Preston. Well, we got one taker. How many here are left to speak? All a few more. Sure. I can call a few more. Yeah, we, yeah, why don't, why don't you just come up and fill up the things and then when there's an empty place, we'll, just rather than just going through the names because I, I gotta save Sarah.

[09:09:39] It's really hard to read some of these and, and see what their name. So we're almost to the end. It's not gonna be that much different. So when a chair is empty, just fill in and when everybody's done, we'll be done. Okay. We'll start, let's start with the woman that was about to talk. Oh, yes. Just because I'm, I already called her and so That's right.

[09:09:56] That's exactly, thank you. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Um, [09:10:00] good evening now. My name is Barb Reti. I am a 26 year veteran teacher of the Madison Metropolitan School District. I've been a reading specialist with the district for 20 of these years, trained specially in the New Zealand based Ohio State Model Reading Recovery program.

[09:10:20] Although I could comment constructively on 10 or more points raised by SB 22, I will restrict myself to two teacher certification and the academic achievement of students of charter schools versus traditional public schools. Currently, under PI 34, teachers are required to renew their licenses by earning six college level credits every five years or by alternative rigorous methods.

[09:10:50] But this bill reduces the certification requirement for teachers in charter schools lowering the standards, not raising them. There [09:11:00] is no data that support the conclusion that lowering teacher certification requirements results in improved student achievement. The testing data available fail to show superior outcomes for charter school students over traditional public schools.

[09:11:18] I am here today to speak for the public school students who are unable to be here to speak for themselves. A couple of years ago, two schools in Madison received the Schools of Promise Award from the Department of Public Instruction. The awards were given to schools that despite 50% or more poverty rates and high minority student population scored higher than the state average on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts exams in reading achievement.

[09:11:57] Rather than enact this bill, which takes away [09:12:00] money from kids in our traditional public schools, the legislature should authorize a study to determine what it was that made possible the successes of the low income, high minority schools of promise and fund those methods. Please, there is no evidence such a standard list approach found in SSB 22 will improve the achievement of our low income minority students.

[09:12:32] My passion for teaching is deep, as is the case with my colleagues. SSB 22 standard list approach to teacher certification is unproven, not rigorous, and will do nothing to attract the best and the brightest. SB 22 is nothing more than a manufactured remedy for largely political gains. Please vote your conscience not [09:13:00] your party and vote no on SB 22.

[09:13:04] Thank you. Thank you. Is there any questions? No. Alberta. Thank you. Well, I totally agree with your point about, am I on? Yeah. Uh, we, we need to be strategic about how we do school reform, and I totally agree with you to look at the areas that are working with some of our most challenging issues, learn from what they do, and, and figure out how we can do more of it and do best practices and, and help to educate other teachers in other communities, in other schools about how the success can be rec replicated.

[09:13:40] I totally agree with that. Well, I, one, I know of two schools at least, that you could look at, or I'm sure there's many others that received the School of Promise award. That's great. And that's what I'm asking you to do. Sure. Is please look at those successful schools. Mm-hmm. Put your money where we know it works.

[09:13:56] It's they're brain research programs. I agree with that [09:14:00] too. Thank you. Any other questions? If not, thank you very much, Uhhuh. Thank you.

[09:14:08] Do you wanna go next? Thank you. And we'll just go right down the list and or go down the line. Thank you. Okay. My name is Jenny Zi and I work for M M S D at Sandberg Elementary School. I'm not against locally managed charter schools. I'm a big fan of No West Mundo. I spent an observation day there. Love it.

[09:14:28] But I do oppose SB 22. I have been a public school educator for 21 years. During those 21 years of service, I've worked in three different states, California, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin. And I've taught in four different school districts. In addition to being a classroom teacher, I've also created innovative programs within the public school system to motivate, inspire, and retain students in our public schools.

[09:14:56] In California, I started a unicycling program for at-Risk Kids, [09:15:00] which is still going strong today. I'm currently replicating that program at Sandberg during our open schoolhouse afterschool program. I've also written and composed music for K two plays in both English and Spanish. Now, here's the catch, I'm not unique.

[09:15:17] There are countless public educators who do similar things every day, working within the system to make it better. In fact, I was delighted to see two of my colleagues from Shabazz over here who have piloted, um, a green teen program and they have computer skills. They get free computers, work with kids.

[09:15:36] They do cross-curricular environmental projects with kids too,

[09:15:42] diverting public money to franchise parters. Uh, charter schools will serve only to weaken and already strap public system and possibly destroy many innovative and creative programs that currently exist. As many have said, there's no credible research that says that charter schools fair any [09:16:00] better or worse than public schools.

[09:16:01] So why the rush? To abandon our public school district and elected school ports, I strongly urge this assembly to vote no on SB 22 so that highly trained, credentialed teachers can get on with the business of educating all children. Instead of what SSB 22 offers that corporations turned education into a business, please do the right thing and do an extreme makeover or completely defeat this bill.

[09:16:33] Thank you. Okay. Thank you. My name is Christine Jensen. I am a teacher, but that's not the role that I want you to hear me, um, speak from today. I'm a parent of a second grader and a fourth grader, and I'm a taxpayer in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Um, I am very fearful of what this bill and other bills proposed in this [09:17:00] session I will do to my own children's education.

[09:17:03] I am not interested in having more charter schools created, if that means that my public school that I'm very satisfied with, they go to West Side Elementary in Sun Prairie. It's an outstanding elementary school. They have high levels of poverty at the school and they have, um, virtually eliminated the achievement gap.

[09:17:21] So there's another one to study. Mm-hmm. Um, I have amazing teachers of my children there and they're getting a great education, but they have a few more years to go before they're done. And I worry greatly about what resources are gonna be there when they are in high school. The taxpayers of the City of Sun Prairie recently voted in a referendum to build a new high school, an amazing facility.

[09:17:48] If you ever get a chance to go see it, it's beautiful. Um, I'm excited to have my kids go there, but I'm wondering what money will be left to, to maintain what they, what the [09:18:00] taxpayers voted for. We voted for that under the understanding that the state would be funding two thirds. And now with all of these cuts, I'm not even sure that they can maintain it.

[09:18:12] I tried to look on their website to see what their predict projections are, and right now people are so mystified by what's actually gonna be happening in the years to come that they can't even, I they're not even publishing anything yet or not that I could, um, see. I also have read Diane Ravi's work.

[09:18:29] Um, the New York Times article states that \$400,000 is an administrative salary in some of these charter schools. I am not interested in having my tax dollars go to pay somebody \$400,000 to manage a school. The average, uh, administrative salary in Wisconsin is, um, 60 to, for really experienced, they get nearly a hundred thousand for a principal that [09:19:00] would be nearly four times greater.

[09:19:03] I am not in support of that. And Senator Darling, while I realized that choices are important, you also said yourself that your CH grandchild got lucky. I don't want my children to have to get lucky to get an education. I want strong public schools, high quality public schools that I can rely on. And then if I want to make a choice to send them somebody someplace else, I can feel good about, well, you know what, but if they don't get in there, this is gonna be still a great opportunity.

[09:19:37] So we need both. We need both strong public schools that are adequately funded and high quality. And then if we have the resources, go ahead and fund some charter schools to provide some choices. The constitution in this state requires you to educate everyone in this state with a high quality education.

[09:19:58] Charter schools, the way that this [09:20:00] bill is authorizing would draw so much money away from public schools that they would become Senator Darling, exactly what your daughter doesn't want for her children. And I hope that Wisconsin would not go down that road. Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much. Is there any questions?

[09:20:20] If not, um, my name is Catherine Burns and I'm a teacher here in Madison. And forgive me, the kids gave me a cold. I teach K one and they like to cough on me. Um, anyway, I'll do my best to talk to you today. I've used my voice a lot today, so, um, I don't have notes unfortunately, so I'm gonna speak off the cuff.

[09:20:41] I'm coming to you today as an ordinary teacher in the state of Wisconsin who teaches in a neighborhood public school. And I would like to say I'm doing an excellent job. My kids are learning. I have happy parents, I have happy administrators. The only one I don't seem to [09:21:00] have happy are politicians and the media lately, I guess.

[09:21:04] Um, so here's my question, I guess for you, is, what is wrong with the system that we have? If you would just fund it for heaven's sakes, I, all the years that I've been teaching now for 11 years in Wisconsin, and in those years you have steadily eroded funding for the schools every single year. You've done it very subtly so that you know, oh, well now we're gonna clean the building every other day.

[09:21:30] Or now that special education student that is included in your classroom is only gonna have support for a portion of their day, even though they need support the entire day. You know, the thing is, is that you can't keep cutting and taking from public schools and then say to us, but we want more innovation.

[09:21:51] We think this other system will be better. It's not fair. And I'm coming to you today to say this whole thing is so unfair to teachers. [09:22:00] Every teacher that I know in the last month has considered whether or not they should change professions. I certainly have thought about it. Politician looks good to me.

[09:22:11] Maybe I could actually affect some change. Um, here's the thing. You're going to lose the high quality teachers you have in this state, and you're gonna end up with a system like Florida has because I know for sure I would never teach there. You know, I, I taught my first two years out in California, in Southern Orange County, and not too far away from Laguna Beach where everyone thinks everything's so great, you know, on the television shows.

[09:22:36] Well, guess what? I wouldn't teach there. Not because there weren't great kids, not because there weren't involved parents, but because the state wasn't funding their schools. And I knew that I couldn't stay in a system that didn't care about public education. So, guess what? If you do this to this, this state, this state that I have lived in my, basically my entire life since I was four years old, if you do this to this state, I'm [09:23:00] telling you right now, either I will switch professions running for some office, maybe yours, and I, either that or I will scour the country or even the world for a place where I can still find a place to teach equality education to neighborhood children who are mixed in race and, and diversity of religion and diversity of economics.

[09:23:27] And I will find that place that's still left where I can have the joy of teaching that brought me to this profession. And I will take my skills and go there, and you will be left with these crappy corporate teachers who don't give a damn about this state or their kids. Thank you,

[09:23:46] Finland. That's where we need to go. Finland. Finland here. Um, my name is Troy Dassler. I'm a, I'm an elementary school teacher, a science teacher. And, um, I guess I just wanna tell my [09:24:00] story because I, I don't know, I just feel like we've been talking about a lot of different things. But, you know, we are the, we are the people that see those, you know, the whites of their eyes every day.

[09:24:08] And I teach at a school that when I first started 10 years ago, the poverty level was probably about about 30%. And right now it's about 70%. At that time, we had about 25 English language learners, and we had two full-time teachers to help support students with English language learners. Now we have 230 students and we have two.

[09:24:34] Teachers who help the kids with, who have, who have special needs with their language. And so, and I see this cuts and cuts and cuts and, and our parents have been so absolutely amazing. The other parents that, that do have more money, they still are supporting our school and they love us. And they've been so supportive in all of this.

[09:24:56] And even under the revenue caps, where every year we suck [09:25:00] more and more cuts. And it eventually got to the point where we were overcrowded at one time and I had to spend two years in a windowless classroom. It's really hard to do the plants unit when you don't have lights or the weather unit when we'd say, okay, run across the hall and find out what the weather's like so we can chart it today.

[09:25:20] And yet, even with that, we still had the support of, of of, of our more affluent families who were there because they would love our diversity, they loved our language diversity, our religious diversity, and our socioeconomic diversity. And then we started seeing more and more parents leave as more and more, more and more cuts came.

[09:25:41] 'cause they said, oh, you know what, I don't think that's right. That our children have to be taught in windowless classrooms or in hallways. And thankfully the voters of Madison allowed us the ability to make an expansion on our school so that, so that now there are no classrooms where they [09:26:00] don't have windows.

[09:26:01] It's because we, they, they've maintained their support for our public schools. And in order to bring back some of those folks, we started dual language programs, which was inspired by a charter school. But our program in our public school is based upon that. Also, we started a new science technology, engineering and mathematics program, which brings university professors and researchers to our classrooms and brings our students to the university to inspire the next generation of scientists, technol, engineers, mathematicians.

[09:26:40] And even through all of this, you would think that's been happening in the last couple weeks. I don't think there's been a single day when our, in our staff lounge where there hasn't been cookies or coffee or donuts and showing support in what we're having, the struggles that we're fighting. But I'm [09:27:00] wondering if we also continue to take away more and more money if this bill passes.

[09:27:05] How are we we're working. I, I we're trying everything. I've written \$40,000 in grants to, in order to be able to have our science lab. Mm-hmm. So when scientists come, they actually have the materials that they need and we can inspire the next generation of students. But I don't know how much further we can really ask of our families and of our teachers, um, if we keep on taking away funding.

[09:27:30] Thank you. Thank you. Is there any questions? I. So how did you do that lab in the dark? It was before I had the lab. Oh, okay. Just like how a bill becomes a law.

[09:27:49] Hello, my name is Liz Wingert. Um, I've been a kindergarten teacher in the Madison School District for 10 years. Um, thank you. Worked at the school that Troy just [09:28:00] spoke about so eloquently. I am not gonna rehash everything that's been said because I agree with most everything that's been said. My challenge to you, uh, let me, lemme First I wanna share a conversation I have with a parent, um, of a student in my classroom this morning.

[09:28:17] He was a teacher in the Milwaukee Public Schools. He saw how this type of funding going to charter schools, what it did to his public school. He said, you wouldn't believe it, Liz, all of the kids would go to this charter school. Guess what? They got all the funding. And then guess who they sent back to us.

[09:28:38] The kids who are behaviorally challenged, emotionally, behaviorally, disabled children. We had the toughest kids and now we didn't have the funding to help them. It's wrong. It's so wrong. I would challenge you to put a mandate out to these new charter schools that are being created to take every child [09:29:00] that walks in their door and keep them and educate them and see if they can do better than the public schools.

[09:29:07] Thank you. Thank you.

[09:29:12] Thank you. My name is Jonah Eggert and I appreciate the time and being able to talk to you. Um, I'm here in two roles, really. I'm the mother of four children, ages 15 to 22 years old. I'm very lucky. They're the greatest gifts in my life, and they all four have attended the Madison Public School. I'm also a teacher, I'm a reading specialist in a district outside of Madison.

[09:29:32] I taught in a private school in Washington, d c a school that now costs over \$30,000 a year for a first grader to go to school there. Um, and I also lived in Montana and we moved back to Madison, Wisconsin so our kids could go to school

here. I have to tell you that, um, this is an emotional subject for me too, because I truly believe that the greatest gift my kids can get is a great education.

[09:29:55] I have two daughters in college, um, and I'm very concerned because I was [09:30:00] brought up in a home where the greatest gift my parents gave me was my education. So I wanna be able to do that for all four of my kids. My kids are, um, as, as probably many people's children, they're not all the same. And my youngest child is a freshman in high school and he really hates school.

[09:30:15] Um, the other three flew through. He had, um, some hearing and speech problems when he was young. And, um, I stuck with the public schools because I knew that I could get the best experts in the public schools. We actually ended up having to get a specialist for him to tutor him. And that experience taught me many, many things.

[09:30:35] But the one thing that it showed me in a way that I had worked with struggling kids my whole life as a teacher and a reading specialist, but to have my own child go through that and to see to this day that even though he scores very well on the W K C E, now he doesn't have that faith and belief in himself.

[09:30:51] I'm opposed to this bill and I'm opposed to it because I believe it will take money away from all of the other kids. And actually, I believe [09:31:00] it will re, it will create a two-tier system in Madison from the time my 22 year old started kindergarten in Madison, Wisconsin. I have gone to, I don't even wanna count how many meetings with the school board as the cuts came down every single year.

[09:31:14] And my kids, my youngest child is not getting the same kind of education that I received in a Wisconsin school that my parents' taxes paid for. But obviously my taxes aren't paying for the same thing. Um, that deeply saddens me. I believe that we need to invest in every single child, and it's the core of who I am as a teacher too.

[09:31:35] You see, I believe that the research did show, and some of you might be familiar with that star research, that if we could have every child reading by the end of third grade on grade level, the number of kids that would end up growing up and going to prison would be drastically reduced. And that is a critical component to me because I believe that we have to believe we can do it, and we need the tools, which we don't agree on what those tools are.

[09:31:58] We need the tools to be able to do [09:32:00] that. If we take kids and we open up more and more charter schools, which cost more, and the research shows those schools cost more, we'll leave less behind. So the public schools are supposed to educate our children on less, and then the charter schools will get more.

[09:32:16] If we gave our public schools the same amount that, for example, the new charter school they're talking about, which hasn't been approved in Madison, the last number I heard was \$26,000 per child. If we gave that much to all the public schools in Madison, the education would go up automatically.

[09:32:32] Automatically. If we lowered their class sizes all to that size, our test scores would rise automatically in Madison because both of those components are critical to the success of children. I want you to think, um, about, about one other thing I'd like you to consider. Um, I'd like you to consider and think about something that you absolutely hate to do.

[09:32:56] Just think for a minute about something you really hate to do. [09:33:00] And now I want you to think about doing that for eight hours every day if you were forced to do that. And then I'd like you to think about doing that in front of your best friends or your spouse or your families, because that's what our struggling readers do every single day.

[09:33:14] Every single day. And so in order for them to, to get the help that they need, we, we need, we need funding and we need to value the expertise of people who know how to diagnose and how to help those children catch up and how to believe in them and never give up in them. And by the way, I was lucky enough to, uh, go to a spend a day with a professor from Finland, and yes, they are magnificent.

[09:33:40] And my school doesn't even wanna even hear about Finland anymore. But the one thing I have to tell you is that they pay their teachers the same as they do lawyers, and they're thought of in the same way. And, uh, the other thing they also have going for them is they have more books in their home than any place else in the world.

[09:33:56] So those two messages are loud and clear. I'd like you to [09:34:00] just consider before you go through with this bill involving some teachers and talking to us. It's not that we do, I think schools are perfect. No. Are all teachers excellent? No. But there are ways, there are ways to help improve our schools, and I'd just like you to think about that.

[09:34:16] Thank you. Thank you very much. Any questions? If not. Hello. Thank you for, uh, hearing me to this evening. Uh, my name is Martha Vasquez. I am a teacher at Malcolm Shabazz City High School here in Madison. For those of you who are not from the Madison area, Malcolm Shabazz City High School was founded 40 years ago with a Ford Foundation grant.

[09:34:43] It then became part of the Madison School District that was part of the grant agreement. We have always str well, we're an innovative school, we're life [09:35:00] earners.

[09:35:05] We try many approaches. We've been a national leader in service learning, which is a curriculum. We are also, we've tried project-based learning. We do all sorts of things at our school and we're very successful and we're very successful with students who have not always met with success in the main. S

[09:35:34] one size does not fit all. So philosophically, am I opposed to charters? No, but I am opposed to this bill. The reason I'm opposed to this bill is because I don't believe that the way it's being funded or proposed to be [09:36:00]

[09:36:01] funded is good, sound, economic, socially, just way in which to fund it. It's just wrong. It's wrongheaded. You need to get the money if charters want, if you want this type of what's being proposed. And I think I understand what it's all about now. I think you have to

[09:36:37] money someplace else.

[09:36:46] Um, I'd like to see it flushed out a lot more. I'd like to see more transparency and I would like to see accountability. I want to see how these charter schools will be [09:37:00] accountable to the taxpayers of

[09:37:11] Wisconsin, to the parents, to the districts in which they're operating. I think that has to be made very clear. So for those reasons, I oppose it. I also want us to be hopeful here because boy, this last month or so has been tough on us. We have felt extremely attacked and held responsible for all the social ills of Wisconsin.

[09:37:41] When in reality, when I think back to when I was a young girl in Milwaukee,

[09:37:59] I [09:38:00] recall when the industrial belt became the rust Belt, when the level of poverty increased, and we saw the decay in the Milwaukee school system.

They've done, boy, the teachers in Milwaukee do a fabulous job with what they, with the hand they've been dealt. If anything, they need more of our support, not less.

[09:38:28] The real culprit here in public education is poverty. Let's name it, it's

[09:38:45] unemployment, underemployment, it's poverty and all of the things that come along with that. The despair in the families, people who turn to drug addiction, alcohol, [09:39:00] all of that affects their children. And these kids come to our schools and we educate them. We do our best, but we need the support of our government and our local government and everyone in Wisconsin because as it was pointed out, we are charged with educating child in Wisconsin

[09:39:41] and they are our future. Thank you. Thank you very much. We'll start on this end and go right down. Um, hello? Can you hear me? My name is Emily Miller. Nope. I don't [09:40:00] think so. You can't hear me or that's not my name? No, I think it's your name. I, I just, I You get it. Press the button. I'm pr I'm pretty sure it's your name.

[09:40:10] Thank you. Still my name. Um, levity This time of the night, I, um, I. I'm a teacher at, um, Hawthorne Elementary School, which

[09:40:35] two schools that, uh, earlier woman spoke about with it's received the Wisconsin School of Promise Award for three years in a row. Um, and I think we're about to get it another year. Um, yeah, so I was just going to actually say that I would like to invite all of you, or any one of you to come [09:41:00] see how we made, uh, how we've made it work at Hawthorne.

[09:41:05] Um, we've had, poverty has been rising every year, and the number of students who speak English as a second language or third language also has been rising every year. But our scores have, have also gone.

[09:41:35] So come to Hawthorne before you vote on this bill. I urge you to come to my school. Um, it's kind of exciting the things that are happening there. Uh, and I don't think we've been getting that many, uh, private dollars we've been doing it with. So, um, the other thing I have on amendment, I wanted to propose an amendment.

[09:41:57] Can, can I do that or just kind of actually, [09:42:00] but I have a amendment that I think you could propose an idea we'd here. Yeah. That's what this

is about. Um, what if you went ahead with the bill but said that the local school board had devoted in,

[09:42:16] so then, so then if it was the right time for that district and they had the money or the budget,

[09:42:36] they felt that it was best for their local school district, they would have it go through. I don't know if you can do that. 'cause I'm, oh, I'm a teacher, not a senator or whatever. But, um, um, my other amendment pro proposal for an amendment was to have people who are appointed, uh, on the board of directors [09:43:00] also have to be local.

[09:43:02] And people have said that already, but then they know their area. They know their district, they know their families. For you. Um, so I wanted to say that, um, I know that Allon, you ran on education and I would like,

[09:43:40] I would like to see more schools work and more students succeed. Um, and I'd like to know that you all have considered every angle, um, before just, uh, okay. Spell that. You've looked at many, many different angles, many things that work before you, uh, stamp this [09:44:00] one or voted or whatever. Um, so that we can have a charter school that meets the needs of all families, including African American families, but that we have them in a way that helps the students but doesn't hurt public education.

[09:44:24] You ended right at the right time. Is there any questions? If not, thank you very much. Okay. I just pass up the opportunity to

[09:44:48] say you are, have such a great smile and a 10 of eight. I applaud you for your wonderful. Oh, thank you. I've never had a editor say that to me before.

[09:45:00] Put it in your diary.

[09:45:10] I am Tara Zuckerberg. I'm a speech therapist with the Madison School District. Used to work in Middleton as well, and I'm here to oppose Senate Bill 22. Um, I wanted share that I'm not opposed to charter schools when, um, control at the local level and already has more charter schools than other states. Um, but I think local control is a key part because the local districts are best in the position to know the needs of their community and have a vested interest in of those charter schools, charter schools.[09:46:00]

[09:46:02] Form, um, their public school counterparts. So I am here as a special educator. And Senator Darlene, you referenced that we don't fund systems, we fund children and we have a saying we use a lot. That fair doesn't mean everyone gets the same thing. It means everyone gets what they need and all children cost the same amount of money to educate.

[09:46:22] And I think have here is, I know when Middleton was looking at adding a virtual school, virtual schools don't cost as much to educate students, but it sounds like each student would still be getting the \$7,700 to whatever corporation might be funding their virtual school. And I'm just wondering where the checks and balances is on that.

[09:46:42] On how much does it truly cost to educate that student and where is money going versus how it is used in a traditional public school setting? In cer I head with where might be going and also Wisconsin and Madison are leaders in IUs of practices[09:47:00]

[09:47:18] with special needs. And that's an issue of social justice. And I'm worried about what will happen and that social justice will be threatened when money is taken out of our public. Schools are open to educate all students pop up and take money. Those public schools, but those not open to the kids I serve in the district.

[09:47:42] Um, and so just that funding from those who need it most and those students with special needs, those students poverty, um, parents aren't as involved in their education, won't be seeking out those options. Like the shared earlier, she's trying to find families for her charter school to get ahold of.

[09:47:58] They're not the people who will be [09:48:00] accessing these school choices, be the ones left in the,

[09:48:06] I think there are great charter school options in many of our school districts. Continue looking into, at the district, local level where, you know, there's research proven how to meet those achievements for students,

[09:48:39] research proven methods on how to meet those achievement gaps for African Americans. Which Wisconsin is the worst state in the nation for. Um, but I don't think that the charter schools are the answer for that. Thanks. Okay. Thank you. Any questions? Thank you very much for,[09:49:00]

[09:49:02] hi, my name is Carly Beschen. I'm a sixth grade teacher at Tokyo Middle School here in Madison, and a 23 year veteran teacher. I'm here today to speak against this bill. Have a variety of reasons for that. Many of the things that have been for me, I completely agree with, and some I will be repeating first.

[09:49:25] I believe that this creates a dual track system unfairly penalized by defunding system and for to spread the education already are,[09:50:00]

[09:50:04] but as it's been said before, those monies are less and every year and the needs are greater and greater. Second, I have a big concern, the governing board, um, being created, um, that it is, I believe it creates an unprecedented political, um, pool that we have seen in this state before, is rarely seen in any other place, perhaps Texas, that it would really, what would be taught have, uh, a adverse effect on, I believe this bill is racist, slippery slope back but equal, but separately was raised in North Carolina in [09:51:00] 1969.

[09:51:03] Schools are, that

[09:51:27] was 15 years after, um, brown versus the Board of Education. At that time, there was incredible white schools. I believe that that would happen with this. Because those, those by the folks who are minority students, students for Badger rocks, those parents are ones who know, need to fill out. They don't have to do those kind of, [09:52:00] that are, I would go it so far.

[09:52:06] Part of that for charter school would create a private charter that be school than what a schools would end up being. Four effort at the national state level for all Wisconsin has been making sure that[09:53:00]

[09:53:01] students have an opportunity for a very, very high quality education. I al also have big concerns about whether or not that would be the case, whether schools would need to meet those same curricular standards. There standards, there are state standards and then school districts leader in that, in creating standards that we must meet curriculum must address.

[09:53:29] We have very big concerns about that. And finally, teacher training. It was I that as I was this up, one of the things that I found, transcripts for the graduate level that I take every five years to keep my at my own expense district does not pay for this. And it's very unclear in what the requirements for would be in charter [09:54:00] school.

[09:54:00] I have two bachelors and a master's degree on, on the salary scale. Me just before a PhD and I continue to take credits. What, what will be the requirement?

[09:54:40] There are just a few of my concerns and my colleagues have mentioned many more that I concur with. Thank you very much for your time. Thank you very much. Hello, my name is Nicole von Hayden. I echo everything that Carly so well put out. Um, I guess in addition, [09:55:00] I as a non-traditional would like to, um, put a face and possibly just a background to what I need to become even a licensed teacher.

[09:55:12] I am have a lot of concerns, teacher licensing for as well as continuing education. I currently hold in general education, which I would assume would be one for a generalized, um, a charter school 'cause it would allow you to teach, um, bilingual education license will be earned, which immersion bilingual education, [09:56:00]

[09:56:13] beginning of what I do as an educator. But, um, that costs \$60,000, um, to mention three years of working full-time nights, weekends, summers. And I believe that that has thrown in on my resilience as a teacher. Me, uh, on, on my pride, um, on the pride for my students. Like those drastic steps I believe in. I am concerned about, I I several times I still so [09:57:00]

[09:57:03] standards

[09:57:09] public school system ourselves to have those.

[09:57:19] School of Encourage, [09:58:00]

[09:58:00] um, charter schools are wonderful, succeeding and we are doing what's best for education system, so I would really consider in the public education system over

[09:58:18] Thanks.

[09:58:23] Before the last speaker,

[09:58:29] 'cause we're, I think

[09:58:35] I was here earlier and Oh, hello? Oh,

[09:58:45] other speaker. An

[09:58:51] art teacher in my third

[09:58:56] school in Racine was [09:59:00]

[09:59:27] partly funded by SC Johnson. I'm currently an elementary art teacher here.

[09:59:38] Bill's accountability. We've heard a lot

[09:59:43] experience in my, my first year teacher

[09:59:49] in that school every week.

[09:59:55] And if I as an art teacher can really [10:00:00] and weren't getting it, that's,

[10:00:05] see the confusion on

[10:00:10] standing me in art class there.

[10:00:15] I saw a second

[10:00:19] as well. If you don't,

[10:00:56] I had a first grade girl being sexually [10:01:00] assaulted at home by her

[10:01:06] for these charter schools. Fiscally.

[10:01:11] If we can't keep them safe, if we can't,

[10:01:16] how do we help them?

[10:01:22] How do we help them succeed beyond that? Look at their faces.

[10:01:31] Stuck in this school, and this was the, to teach for the following year.

[10:01:40] They told me I was,

[10:01:44] I didn't really.