

Republican Bill Could Raise Property Taxes by \$577 Million

Written by WisDems Press

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Republicans in the state Assembly passed legislation Tuesday that would make most private school students eligible for a taxpayer-funded tuition subsidy.

MADISON, Wis. – On Tuesday, Republicans in the state Assembly passed a bill that could raise property taxes for Wisconsin residents by as much as \$577 million, [according to a Department of Public Instruction analysis](#).

This disastrous bill would direct funding from neighborhood public schools towards private schools, at a huge cost to Wisconsin residents already facing rising costs.

In addition to support from legislative Republicans, gubernatorial candidates Rebecca Kleefisch and Kevin Nicholson have long supported similar policies which would redirect funds to unaccountable private schools and send property taxes soaring.

The legislation is a signal of harmful policies to come for Wisconsin residents if Republicans take control of the governor's office. After historic tax relief under Gov. Evers and other policies to move our state forward, Republican legislation like this will hurt working families and fixed income seniors.

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This is despite Wisconsin public schools' ranking as eighth best in the nation under the leadership of Gov. Evers, after falling to 18th less than five years ago under the Walker-Kleefisch administration.

Gov. Evers is helping Wisconsin families get ahead. That's why he has cut income taxes by 15% during his first term, and has proposed giving a portion of the state's surplus back to each Wisconsin tax filer and their dependents through a \$150 tax credit – giving a family of four \$600. Gov. Evers' [surplus plan](#) will also improve education quality while delivering \$188 million in property tax relief.

“With this proposal to raise property taxes by nearly \$600 million, Republicans continue to prove that their policies would hurt working families,” said Democratic Party of Wisconsin Rapid Response Director Hannah Menchhoff. “Radical Rebecca Kleefisch and Kevin Nicholson are only interested in dividing our state further by defunding our public schools and skyrocketing property taxes. That math doesn't add up.”

Read more about the Republican plan to raise property taxes below:

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Bill offering private school vouchers to all students could raise property taxes as much as \\$577M, DPI says](#)

Republicans in the state Assembly passed legislation Tuesday that would make most private school students eligible for a taxpayer-funded tuition subsidy — a plan that could raise property taxes by as much as \$577 million, according to an estimate from the state education agency.

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The bill would lift enrollment and household income limits in the state's private school voucher programs, allowing families who are already paying tuition at private schools to start receiving a public subsidy.

[...]

Since 2011, Republican lawmakers have expanded the [private-school voucher] program to include wealthier students and to areas outside of Milwaukee.

The Department of Public Instruction estimates a bill passed 59-34 Tuesday would raise property taxes by as much as \$577 million for residents living outside of Milwaukee. In Milwaukee, the property tax impact would be about a \$2 million increase, according to the estimate from DPI.

"This local property tax hike is over a half of a billion dollars a year and that is to fund a competing school system that began 30 years ago as a little pilot program for our students in poverty," Rep. Sony Pope, D-Mount Horeb, said.

[...]

The DPI's analysis of the bill's effect on property taxes assumes an enrollment increase of 67,869 students in the statewide and Racine programs. Currently, a total of 18,392 students are enrolled among private schools participating in those voucher programs.

Overall, 48,919 students are enrolled in the state's four voucher programs, including those in Milwaukee and for students with disabilities.

Another 35,876 students attend the same private schools but are paying full tuition — many of which would be eligible to begin receiving a voucher to subsidize the cost under the bill passed Tuesday that would lift income limits on all of the state's programs and enrollment limits in the

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statewide program.

Overall, about 119,000 students are enrolled in private schools across Wisconsin.

Property taxes are likely to increase in areas of the state if the bill is implemented because school district officials are allowed under state law to raise revenue to make up for the loss of state aid when students residing in the district enroll in private schools using a private school voucher.

Vouchers provided under the Racine and statewide programs are funded by redirecting the state aid that would have gone to the public school district where the student using a voucher resides.