

Sen. Moore Says Republicans Will Save Choice, *from page 1*

To clarify the vote, the *School Choice Advocate* contacted the clerk for the caucus, who said, "Senator Moore was not present during the [caucus] vote on the education package." The clerk said that she contacted senators who were absent from caucus deliberations and that Sen. Moore's office responded by e-mail to vote "no" on the K-12 package.



Howard Fuller, left, invited Sen. Gwen Moore (D-Milwaukee) to address the crowd and explain her position on the MPCP at the April 11 school choice rally.

The next day, April 5, the Democrats' plan went to the full Senate. Moore voted for the Senate budget plan that included the MPCP cuts. Moore did not address these cuts during the Senate debate.

After the Senate approved the budget, Moore issued a statement that "expressed concern" that the school choice cuts were "too severe and too immediate."

In an effort to explain her confusing record, Moore also told rally participants that the share of the choice program financed by Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) is too high at 45 percent. However, on May 29, 2001, Moore voted against a state budget

plan that would have cut the MPS share to 33 percent.

At the rally, Moore also told choice supporters that students in the MPCP should take state standardized tests. But last year, Senate Democrats rejected an Assembly proposal for a long-term evaluation of the choice program involving the use of state standardized tests.

Moore's conflicting statements and votes on the MPCP left rally attendees confused about her actual position on the program. 🎓

Champions of choice



Gov. Scott McCallum



Rep. Scott Jensen



Rep. John Gard



Sen. Mary Panzer



Rep. Steve Foti

Governor McCallum and Republican members of the budget conference committee, above, have vowed to protect choice. The conference committee, which also includes four Democrats, meets this month to hammer-out a 2001-2003 state budget repair bill.

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Hundreds Rally to Protect Choice Program

More than 500 parents, children, educators, and community activists from across Milwaukee rallied at Messmer High School on April 11 to protest a decision by State Senate Democrats to slash the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP).

Carrying picket signs and pro-school choice placards, the audience represented Jewish, Islamic, Christian, Hispanic, Asian, White and African American families from across the city.

They energetically stomped the bleachers and cheered their spokesman, former Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Superintendent Howard Fuller. The event, which had a campaign-like atmosphere, followed by less than two weeks the decisive election of school choice supporter Barbara Horton to the MPS board. (*See photos, page 3.*)

"The real reason we are here tonight is because of these children," Fuller said motioning to a line of children holding homemade pro-school choice signs. "We will fight forever for our children."


Fuller urged parents to continue using their power as voters to elect officials who support the choice program. "We're going to have to start voting for people who support us and voting out those who don't."

To roars of approval, MPCP parent Tony Higgins agreed: "We are going to send a message to Madison that we will not be defeated."

The audience responded with vigorous applause when Fuller introduced elected officials whose support has

been crucial to MPCP parents. They included Gov. Scott McCallum, Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen, Rep. Scott Walker, Rep. Steve Nass, Sen. Bob Welch, and MPS Directors Horton, Ken Johnson, and John Gardner. Milwaukee Alderman Mike Murphy, a strong supporter of city charter schools, also attended to show support for parents.

The rally attracted a handful of choice opponents, including MPS Directors Peter Blewett and Jennifer Morales. When they inexplicably attempted to take over the meeting, parents shouted them off center stage, chanting, "We want choice! We want choice!"

State Sen. Gwendolynne Moore, one of three Milwaukee senators who voted for the budget that cuts choice funding, also attended. Moore, whose votes on choice send decidedly mixed signals, said MPCP supporters should rely on Republican elected officials to save the Milwaukee program. (*See story below.*) 



Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist greets Pastor Cheryl Brown, of Believers in Christ Christian Academy, at the April 11 school choice rally.

Senator Moore Speaks to Choice Supporters

State Sen. Gwendolynne Moore (D-Milwaukee) told parents and public officials at an April 11 school choice rally that Milwaukee parents can count on Republicans to restore cuts in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) approved by the Democratic-controlled State Senate.

As for her own record, Sen. Moore has sent conflicting signals about the MPCP.

On April 4, the Senate Democratic caucus generated its

version of the 2001-2003 state budget repair bill. That plan cut MPCP funding 75 percent in two years.

At the April 11 rally, and in a statement issued a day before it, Moore said she "voted against" the April 4 caucus' K-12 education plan because of the choice cuts.

However, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's* account of the meeting said the caucus OK'd the choice cuts "with no discussion, and no Milwaukee-area senator defending school choice..."

continued on page 4



From Ashland to Beloit to Milwaukee: Editorial Comment on School Choice Cuts*

"Killing school choice may create new problems"

April 9, 2002
Ashland Daily Press

"...Senate Democrats ... took a hatchet to Milwaukee's school choice program.... [W]hacking an immediate \$23 million from the school choice program leaves 10,000 Milwaukee students and their parents with little alternative but to return their children to public schools. Because the state funds school districts on a per-pupil basis, and with the increased pressure on the Milwaukee Public Schools, there is a legitimate question of whether or not the state will really save any money at all.... A decision to abandon school choice should be made considering not just program cost but educational merits of the program and parents wishes."



Staff of St. Joan Antida High School at April 11, 2002 school choice rally.

"Putting politics above poor kids. Senate renews partisan attack on school choice..."

April 9, 2002
Beloit Daily News

"...Democrats (with the lone exception of gubernatorial candidate Gary George of Milwaukee) gutted that program they love to loathe, school choice.... [T]he Milwaukee school choice program ... is working.... Thousands of youngsters have taken advantage of improved schools, where overall achievement is up. The program is highly popular with parents. It has stood up to legal challenge. But the very idea ... is anathema to the education establishment and its unions.... So choice pits two key Democratic constituencies — the education establishment and poor, inner city families — against

one another. The education lobby produces barrels of money and an army of campaign foot soldiers. Guess which side wins the day with the politicians?"



The MPCP enrolls more than 10,000 low-income children from the city of Milwaukee.

"Choice mugging in Madison"

April 8, 2002
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

"Once again, the reigning Democrats in the state Senate are shamefully seeking to crush a program that's meeting the educational needs of thousands of poor kids in Milwaukee. Incredibly, no Milwaukee Democrat — except gubernatorial candidate Gary George, at the last minute — stood up to this legislative mugging, which would ... bring havoc to thousands of families struggling here to make ends meet.... Why weren't Milwaukee's lawmakers screaming?... Senate Democrats must learn to give their antipathy for the choice program a rest.... The program's here and visibly doing good — giving low-income parents an educational choice similar to what better-off parents enjoy. The program's also spurring MPS to improve. Gutting the program now would only make life more miserable for poor families and rid MPS of a prod to reform." 🇺🇸

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School Choice Supporters Rally to Save MPCP



More than 500 people attended the rally at Messmer High School, which enrolls 320 students in the MPCP.



Reps. Steve Nass, left and Scott Jensen, right.



Parents from Islamic schools support the MPCP.



Howard Fuller calls on parents to vote for choice supporters.



Gov. Scott McCallum, left and Sen. Bob Welch, right.



Rep. Scott Walker with students of Yeshiva School.



A Hispanic mother pleads for school choice.



Ald. Mike Murphy and MPS board member Barbara Horton.