

## Wisconsin AB446 Vote (Machine Generated Transcript)

[00:00:00] Gentlemen from the 81st.

[00:00:08] Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo) - Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise, uh, in opposition to, uh, AB 4 46, SB 4 54. Um, I have nothing wrong with reading readiness assessments, except that we already do a lot of reading readiness assessments. And this one is for a very specific, um, problem in reading a problem that is not experienced by the vast majority of our school students.

[00:00:39] Rather those who solver from struggling with reading, there are multiple. Of things that are a problem, not just dyslexia or needing Orton Gillingham instruction. This has been a contentious thing in my life for 40 years now. Um, [00:01:00] being probably one of the very few people here, who's had reading methods, instruction.

[00:01:06] I can tell you that teaching phonics while it is a very important part of reading instruction, it is not the solution to reading problems. Rather. It is one of the solutions. And if you look at the people who spoke in favor of this bill, most of them have had dyslexic children. Or work for the art and Gillingham society or for a dyslexic society that in itself says a whole lot, especially when reading specialists across our state know that this is only one method.

[00:01:40] Another problem with this bill is that the funding for it is not sustaining. The funding that we have for it comes from Asur funds that is gone in two years. And yet our school districts are responsible to continue this testing, which is a fairly costly investment. And we're not doing [00:02:00] well enough by them in the first place.

[00:02:03] Third. I was visiting with a metal middle school teacher last night, my teacher acknowledges that there are some problems with reading and other things, but he was sharing his journey with me. This is a young man that I knew when he was in middle school. So we're talking a long time ago. He said one of the hardest parts of being a middle middle school teacher right now is that even in the 10 years that he's been teaching the problems that kids come to his class with.

[00:02:34] Are so vastly different. And so changeable that one solution like this does not fit all. As a matter of fact, we know that if we overlay the achievement map in the state of Wisconsin, with the poverty map, those two things are identical. If we really want to solve the problems that we have in lack of reading scores and lack of math [00:03:00] scores, we need to take care of the problem of poverty.

[00:03:03] Of housing of having our kids just have a square meal before they come to school and we're not choosing to do that, but that really is the solution to the problem. Not I'm mandated funding, mandated funding. That's not sustainable, not to test everyone for something that less than 10% of our students even have applicable to them, but to deal with the real sources of the problem.

[00:03:33] It seems to me, the here in the assembly, we have continually slapped a bandaid and said, this is going to fix the problem. I can tell you as a person who was a specialist reading teacher who took reading methods, instruction, who has battled to have my behaviorly disordered students not have to go through phonetic instruction at a sixth and seventh grade.

[00:03:58] But rather to be taught [00:04:00] how to read and not just taught phonetics, which by the way, destroyed their appetite for reading. If they ever had one. And then it was tough for me to get it back many times I did, but not always. I just really beg you for all of those reasons to vote. No, on this bill. It is not the solution to a problem that some students have.

[00:04:24] And there are solutions I would love to have you join with me in some of those things that I've just suggested. Some of the things that we on the side of the aisle have proposed and have been funded. Thank you. The question before the body is concurrence gentlemen from the 62nd.

[00:04:44] Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and (Rep. Robert Wittke R-Racine) I will rise to say that we need to pass this bill. I guess I was not in the same committee hearing with the. Gentlemen that just spoke 600,000 children in this state [00:05:00] can not read to grade level. We have the worst racial achievement gaps in the country. Is this a silver bullet that will solve all of those things?

[00:05:12] No, but I believe the bill is well thought out by people in organizations that believe some tighter framework around. Can I help some of those children, many of them that don't have a choice of where they go to school, um, to get better with their literacy by the time they're in third grade, I think we have to make every effort in this state to add accountability.

[00:05:41] I, all I hear in committee hearings these days are we have laws on the books. Everything is going well. Well by the statistics. With the learning loss that we just, uh, uh, experienced this last week, I believe that, uh, we need to take this bill and I will commend all of the [00:06:00] parents that came and testified as well as those that submitted written testimony to our committee, telling us how difficult it was to get proper testing, uh, for their children, uh, in this standing.

[00:06:15] The vote is yes, which I believe is green. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, lady from the 23rd on concurrence. (Deb Andraca D-Whitefish Bay) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today's Milwaukee journal set, and all does a really good job of summarizing what this bill really does permission to read for my printer. Without objection. The headline says this bill would triple the number of reading tests for young students.

[00:06:44] It wasn't that long ago that parents were lining up to take their kids out of standardized testing. This was all pre pandemic and it was a while ago. We have bigger things to worry about right now, but we all know the saying that if it's not broke, if it ain't broke, don't. [00:07:00] Well, we all know that something is broken in our public schools.

[00:07:04] Not enough kids are learning to read, but what this bill says is if you know, it's broke, don't fix it, test it again and again, and again, to make sure you know, what's broke. And how does that actually fix our problem? Before I ran for state assembly, I was a substitute elementary school teacher at my local public school.

[00:07:23] One of the jobs that I did most often in the beginning of the school. With something in the classroom while the teacher did individual reading tests with each kid to benchmark them at the beginning of the year with 25 to 28 students in each classroom, this one test would take a few days and I would rotate from class to class to help the teachers do the benchmarking.

[00:07:46] Now this bill will triple the amount of testing. So this is actually taking away the time that your kids, regular classroom teacher. In your classroom, face-to-face with your child. [00:08:00] And this is actually the best case scenario. When I was doing my student teaching at a public school in Milwaukee, south side, we didn't have the luxury of a substitute teacher.

[00:08:11] During student testing. Each classroom teacher was expected to individually test 28 third graders while simultaneously managing all the other students in the class. This process took weeks because we ended up having to pull students out of lunch, out of music, out of gym before school afterschool, simply to get the individual time that you need to do a quality benchmark test on every individual student.

[00:08:41] Now, the goal of this bill is a good one identifying and diagnosing students before third grade with reading challenges such as dyslexia is. To ensure that they get the help they need by third grade. But what good is data, if you're not actually able to use it [00:09:00] and experienced second grade teacher spoke to me about this proposal.

[00:09:04] She told me she has stacks and piles of testing data on all of her students. What she needs is the today. To review the data and do a thorough diagnosis and the assistance to execute and analyze the individual plans for each of those 28 students. What our students need most are more reading specialists who can implement targeted learning plans or who have experience with dyslexia and visual processing.

[00:09:35] We need more classroom aides who can help teachers in the classroom, either work one-on-one with students or manage the rest of the kids to keep the learning going for the other 27 students. But this bill has none of that. This bill triples, the amount of testing and gives classroom teachers, nothing but an unfunded mandate.

[00:09:57] Now some of my colleagues have argued that they believe that some of [00:10:00] the ARPA funds going to schools can cover this. But like my colleagues said earlier, those funds are not sustainable and they're not distributed evenly to every school. Meanwhile, this mandate does apply equally to every single school.

[00:10:17] Now I know many of you will vote for this bill and pat yourselves on the back thinking you have helped students read, but your unwillingness to provide every school, the resources to execute. These plans shows either a complete lack of understanding of the workings of real-world day-to-day classrooms or an attempt to score some political points at the expense of actually investing in and improving our kids' reading scores.

[00:10:44] What we're facing is not an achievement gap. What we're facing is an opportunity gap. I wish that every single classroom in this state had the. To bring in extra substitute teachers and specialists and sit down with every single [00:11:00] child so that they can get the help they need at an early age and paved the way for success.

[00:11:06] But that's not what this bill does. Our state is sitting on the biggest budget surplus in recent history. So it's not a matter of, can we do this? We can. And we must, when you know, something is broken, Something as important as making sure every child can read by the end of third grade, what good are a stack of test scores saying?

[00:11:30] Yep. Something's broken without also providing the means to fix it. We can do better. The vote is no lady from the 22nd. (Janel Brandtjen R-Menomonee Falls) Thank you, Mr. Speaker,

[00:11:47] not being able to read is a death song. Not being able to understand, not be able to get a job. Heck not even going to get a driver's license. I think I'm one of [00:12:00] the few legislators in here that actually went to MPS. Just a couple of us,

[00:12:10] the MPS student t-shirt the MPS reading scores are the criminal.

[00:12:20] Not being able to read in this day and age, not being able to participate. How do you get a job?

[00:12:32] The amount of money that we spend on education in this state is probably one of the highest out of all 50 states. What we're trying to talk about here is something that's successful. And taking a step back and saying, is there a better way to do it? Is there a better way to teach reading?

[00:13:00] Because I think having kids, the ability to read is something we both agree on Republicans, Democrats independence as a mom.

[00:13:09] I can't think of anything more tragic than not being able to. So, what we're asking for here, is there a better way to get an outcome? Is there a better way to do it? Because right now is not working right now. Our children are falling behind right now. Kids are making poor choices because they can't.

[00:13:39] If you can't read, you're not engaged. You don't know what's going on. If you can't read, you're missing all those opportunities of childhood Harry Potter books, Nancy drew, all the things that take you all around the world. Reading is a great gift. I [00:14:00] applaud so much having this conversation because we have to do something.

[00:14:07] And that's what today is about. Thank you very much,

[00:14:13] gentlemen, from the 52nd on concurrence.

[00:14:20] (Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt R-Fond du Lac) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, last week, there were scores that came out from the forward exam from 2021. So it was taken this last spring. The Ford exam is taken by grades three through eight. And I'm going to focus on the, the ELA, the English language arts portion of this, because that of course contains the reading scores.

[00:14:51] The test was last taken in 2009. It was not taken in 2020 because of the pandemic.

[00:15:00] And it was a new thing at that time. And there was great concern about it. And so the federal government allowed the states to not to administer the statewide test in 2020 in 2021. We did it again. I can tell you that I was pushed by some.

[00:15:21] To jump into trying to convince the federal government to not have that test taken. And in turn, have the state not take the test. Many of, you know, a colleague that we've had here for a number of years who was chairman of the. Senate education committee. I think it was the assembly education committee as well, Senator Olson.

[00:15:48] And he looking at these tests, he commonly had a phrase that he said that these tests should not be used as a hammer, but should be used as a flashlight. So in [00:16:00] other words, you're trying to, trying to show the way there indicates there's a problem and starts that process of indicating where you're going to go to fix that.

[00:16:12] And I would largely agree with that. So we've had this flashlight shining. I think it'd be more accurate to call it a spotlight because the evidence of problems in reading and Wisconsin have been evident for a long time. And it isn't that there haven't been things done to try to fix the problem. There have been little things that have been done.

[00:16:40] And I think a lot of it was, although it was well-intended, it wasn't addressing the heart of the issue and the heart of the issue is not money with all that certainly helps. And I'm not going to say that there's not going to be some more money needed to implement some [00:17:00] of the things that are needed.

[00:17:05] The problem we've got is a reading methodology problem. This is not the first time I've had this microphone in my hand and said this, and I'm not going to go through it in detail again, you know what I've said about it before I disagree with some of you across the aisle, but I believe that the scientific evidence points that a phonics-based instruction of.

[00:17:26] Is the method that is most successful in teaching students, how to read. Now, sometimes we get lost in this, that it's just about phonics. No, that isn't the case. There's, there's a lot more, it's called a phonics based instruction. There's a lot more to it than that. If we dedicate ourselves as a state, we have evidence coming from other states that have zoomed past us in scores that it works.

[00:17:58] So, let me [00:18:00] just put out some of this info. So, you know, perhaps some of you didn't read the media on these things about the statewide scores. So a lot of the media reports throughout the word proficient, essentially proficient means grade level. There's some disagreement on that, but that's essentially what it means and on the statewide test.

[00:18:22] And remember, I'm focusing on ELA. There's proficient and advanced. Well, in the 2019 forward exam, that's grades three through eight, and this is statewide numbers, proficient and advanced category had 40.8% in 2019. So almost 41%, two years later that had dropped to 33.7% in just two years.

[00:18:56] What if we go back further than that. So is this a trend? Remember I said [00:19:00] the flashlight, this supposed to spot a trend. Well, this trend is not new, so let's go back to 2017, 2017. Now this statistic I found was just proficient. Um, but I think if you added advanced into it, it would come out pretty much the same.

[00:19:20] So 2017 was 34.3 and then the next year 33.8, that's a drop. And then the next year of 2019, it went to 32.9. So another drop 20, 20 or 80 said there was no test. And now cratered in two years from 32.9 to 27.5, I think it's pretty clear. There's a trend. And what's been being done, which has largely included, thrown a whole bunch of money at the problem hasn't been working.

[00:19:56] It's about methodology. Now I would [00:20:00] contend that those numbers actually might even be worse because we had a significant number of students that were not. Now whether they just didn't come in or whether they did an opt-out that these percentages, I don't think distinguished between that. So in Milwaukee, we had 56% of the students were not tested Madison, 50% green bay, 26% Racine, 18%.

[00:20:31] Now having spent a lot of years in a classroom, when my students had to take a test of any. The ones who kind of would be absent on the day of the test were largely the ones who were not as academically gifted, maybe had a reluctance to school in general. And I don't think it's a stretch to say that in those students that were not tested, those probably were [00:21:00] not amongst our strongest students.

[00:21:03] So I suspect that that number that we're seeing here is probably even less. Time will tell we are in a crisis in Wisconsin and reading

[00:21:21] students that are not proficient in reading study is showing that they are four times more likely to drop out of school. They will earn significantly less money over the course of their life. They also have lower health. Issues or more health issues I should say. And lower civic, civic engagement.

[00:21:43] Wisconsin's reading scores. It wasn't too long ago. We're top five in the country. And we're now sitting how you rate it somewhere between 25 and 35. And I think it's going to be worse. Once all these statistics are added up across the country [00:22:00] from the most recent test scores, the achievement gap. A lot is made of the African-American achievement gap.

[00:22:09] And while those numbers are true and they are significant and they are the biggest in the country and they are not new, we've been dealing with this for, I think, 10 years. If you looked at all sectors, we're pretty much sliding in all of them in our rankings. So I'll repeat we're in a crisis and reading.

[00:22:37] These students who are not identified early on, many of them will end up in special education. My my point is not against special education. We should have special education. We are always going to have a certain level of students who are going to struggle. That's the nature of humanity is that we all don't have the same types of skills,[00:23:00]

[00:23:02] but looking at our special education college, In the state of Wisconsin, Ana go back 40 years, had the fiscal bureau prepare some data just in terms of special education students in the state. In 19 80, 81 school year, we had 70,000, almost 70,000 students in special education, which was 8.7% of all of the students.

[00:23:30] 8.7%. 2021 most recent year, we have the data

[00:23:39] not quite double, but getting there 14.6% of students across the state, not qualifying for special education. I think that's a crisis.

[00:23:57] The more students that we have in special [00:24:00] education, the more educated, more expensive education is because it's sure everybody would agree. Those students cost more.

[00:24:09] We need to do something because most of those students in special education have reading problems. The earlier we can identify those reading problems, meaning K even pre-K through second grade. The more, we're going to be able to assess those reading skills, which is why there are additional assessments that are being performed as part of this, not just this one pinprick.

[00:24:36] And then we'll use that as an assumption going forward. The more frequently we can do that, and it's not excessive, these are not long tests. Don't get this idea that they're sitting in front of a computer for a couple of hours on end as little kids. They can't attend that. These are important to be able to track progress.

[00:24:57] And once again, to point that flashlight, but now the key [00:25:00] behind all of this is what are you going to do to fix it? You can identify that you've got a problem with scores and we have too many students in special education that have in general and almost all of them have reading problems. What are you going to do about it?

[00:25:15] Well, the methodology that we have been using for years, and I'm not going to go into all the details of the reading wars, because. That's for a different bill, but the methodology that is involved, this bill gives some indications of that methodology. And I will tell you, it is phonics-based. It is Orton-Gillingham based.

[00:25:34] These are the types of methods that have been proven, scientifically proven to be most successful. And some people will say, well, that's what you do with dyslexic students. I am surprised less and less to find out that the methods that are used to help dyslexic students read work pretty well for all the rest of the students as well.

[00:25:58] Who, if they work, why [00:26:00] wouldn't we use it? This idea that kids won't love reading. Oh, come on. It's all about how it's presented. If a teacher, if you love reading and you want to project that upon your school. You want to present information in a way that is going to be enjoyable to them to say that there is no way to present reading on a phonics-based or Orton-Gillingham approach that can be enjoyable for children.

[00:26:26] I, I completely reject that theory.

[00:26:33] We need to be dedicated to this cause and it needs to be bi-partisan and I have a feeling we're going to get that. And there is not, this is not the end of the road. There's more, that needs to be done. And I will be along for that ride

[00:26:56] because we can't do anything else. We have to [00:27:00] do it. So I will plead with all of my colleagues, especially those cross, the. Who I believe take this problem. Seriously. I will plead with you to understand that the way have been doing it is not working and we have to change, embrace the ideas that are working in other states set aside politics, and let's get children in Wisconsin reading at grade level.

[00:27:39] So that as a president, one said, no child is left behind. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, gentlemen from the 48th for an introduction.

[00:27:53] Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to introduce my staff and my interns. Uh, I guess [00:28:00] in glum, I, if you don't mind, please stand up and, uh, Tyler here. Jason glum is my staff member guessing and his fiancée Rami, a resident of the 48 assemble it this day. After 20 years, working at a monitor and managing a taxi company in Madison in return to the university of Wisconsin, uh, at four years, um, to complete two degrees in political science and in public.

[00:28:30] After graduating and the top 20% of his class, Jason apply for a position in my office and was hired as my face, uh, uh, stop in the office. Tyler Hill is one of my interns at the office. Uh, Tyler is a Gino at UWA Madison who complete, who will complete degrees, two degrees in political science and economics by January of 2020.

[00:28:58] Tyler and native of [00:29:00] Durham, Illinois, and a former model, you and committee member is an active member of the Sigma P fraternity at the university of Wisconsin political science club. Uh, Sarah Hass, uh, has already left for the day. Uh, Sarah is our second intern in the office. Sarah who grew up in Milwaukee area, came to our office from UWA.

[00:29:22] Madison VRC is majoring in information. And risk management, uh, C is also completing a certificate in public policy. Sarah is an active member of the UWA business engineering leaders program as well as see, is faced. And OBCs on that provides scholarships to young women in under developed countries to community fundraising.

[00:29:44] Please join me in giving a, an approach to, uh, um, guessing and, uh, Tyler Hills.[00:30:00]

[00:30:02] lady from the 12th and concurrence.

[00:30:09] (Rep. LaKeisha Myers D-Milwaukee) Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I actually support this bill and I think it is interesting for me too. It is very, very few and far back. Opportunities where I would disagree with some fellow educators and where I would disagree, um, with some of my colleagues on my side of the aisle. But I think I have a unique position in this conversation.

[00:30:34] And I, I just want to, to speak to the reasons why, and I looked quickly Mr. Speaker on, uh, online, because I wrote an article. Shortly after I'd, uh, assumed office in 2019, that was called the ABCs and one, two threes of college remediation. And I will tell you, I do not agree with the makeover Institute on a whole lot, but they [00:31:00] produced a report in 2019 that said permission to read from printed.

[00:31:07] Thank you. I'll take that as a yes. That objection. According to the mech Iver Institute, and this was back in 2019, based on 2018 data, it stated that 50 50. Of the high schools who received

five stars on Wisconsin's 2018 report cards, graduated students who needed the remedial classes on average Wisconsin's best high schools graduate.

[00:31:28] Uh, I graduated students were 21% of them needed to be remediated when they entered the UWU system. These students came from all over the state, Brookfield Tomahawk, Shorewood, Kenosha, and Milwaukee, and many. So let's just put this to bed right now that this is just an MPS problem. And yes, I graduated from MPS.

[00:31:50] Everybody who read, who graduated from the NPS school. Raise your hand. Okay. Janell raise yours. Do thank you. Okay. So we can get that part out of the way, because there was [00:32:00] some sting about how many of us graduated from MPS. I'm done with that conversation today. What I am talking about with this bill is making sure the students actually have screeners in front of them.

[00:32:14] And teachers have the ability to screen their students and get them some individualized plan. Not saying it has to be an IEP, but actually utilize something that they already do. And a lot of times, some of them do they utilize programs like achieve 3000, but those are programs and I ready and other things like that to help students.

[00:32:36] Catch up. In my opinion, this bill is to not get you to the catch-up point. This is catching you. Once you get to the door of the school and you have come to that door of that school house, ill prepared, and we continuously push students and allow them to go through. And we know they cannot read at grade level.

[00:32:58] We know it. [00:33:00] So let's not act like we don't have any. I work in a middle school in Madison. If I weren't here, I'd be there as an administrator. I'm pulling students for small group instruction to help them because they are three and four years behind reading. I'm talking about students is going into high school next year.

[00:33:24] This is in the eighth grade. And guess what? Not all of them look like. So when we talk about having issues, talk about the fact that there's a good, uh, a big deficit between black and white students. That's the glaring one. There is also a big rift between the scores of white students and Asian students.

[00:33:46] So let's talk about that too. So this is, this is not something that's just a black and white thing. This is an all student thing. This is a Wisconsin thing, and that's where we need to take this conference. Looking at this, I don't [00:34:00] care who introduced this bill, whether it was a Democrat, whether it was a Republican, whether it was Jesus himself, I would still go along with this bill because we see, we have the flashlight, as the representative said, we know we have the data, as my colleague said, so let's do something about it.

[00:34:24] Title one, funding exists for a reason. You can pay for this through title one funder, you can pay for this through title one, funder. If you got extra money through Esser, you can help do that too.

[00:34:42] I understand. We all know as educators though, those of us who've been in classrooms day in and day out that we often are asked to do more with less. That's a different conversation for today. We have things that are already at our disposal that we can [00:35:00] use. So that's something we need to do. So when we look at this, we're talking about leveled reading instruction.

[00:35:08] You can help by utilizing these things that we have, the screeners do not take long. The entire class can do these at the same time. I talked to Dr. Burke, Dr. Kim Yona Burke, who came to our, um, our committee hearing. I spent time and went through this process with her because I'll be the first person I'm like, Hmm.



[00:35:33] Okay. On the surface, this sounds okay. So let me ask some poignant questions and ask how it worked in other states. What are we talking?

[00:35:44] So going through this process and actually talking with her, I'm understanding that this is not considered a panacea to solve the fact that all children can't read Rome, wasn't built in a day and it didn't break in a day either. [00:36:00] You have to start somewhere. When we look at the deficit between African-American and white students, when it comes to.

[00:36:11] They're glaring. You can't ignore that.

[00:36:16] You can ignore that. We have the opportunity to actually do something about it. I'm sick and tired of going along with the status quo, just because it may hurt somebody's feelings.

[00:36:34] I'm tired of the argument that, oh, this is just some more work that we have. I work hard every day and I'm sure all the teachers do too. If we can streamline some of the processes that we use and utilize the things that we already have, we can make this happen.

[00:36:55] I'm tired of excuses on both sides.[00:37:00]

[00:37:02] This is about getting kids early enough so that they can move forward. Somebody earlier talked about how you have to be able to comprehend and read, to get a job. Yes. Half of the job that we do in here as the 99 members is reading, at least it's supposed to be, I don't know how many y'all read. Sometimes I'd be a little suspect, but you know, that's a different thing, but I'm just going to tell you, reading is a part of the job, making sure that we actually have students who can comprehend the instructor.

[00:37:36] Whether it be working at McDonald's serving you your coffee or whether it's being the CEO of some fortune 500 company, the skill sets need to be the same. And as a special education teacher, I can tell you a lot of the methodologies that we were taught to teach special needs. Students actually do work [00:38:00] with general education students.

[00:38:02] They do.

[00:38:06] That's my approach for this bill. That's the reason I'm voting for it because we need to do something I'm tired of the same data reporting. The same thing year after year after year, it's time for us to stop making excuses and actually do something.

[00:38:25] We have technology in our schools. We have the ability to do that. We buy programs all the time to help us.

[00:38:36] This is not a money issue, because if you got poor children that can't read, you got it through title one,

[00:38:45] we have Sr funding who can help. Yes. We only get that for a limited amount of time.

[00:38:57] Mr. Speaker. I say the [00:39:00] vote is green and hopefully some of my colleagues will join me. The choice is yours lady from the 20th on concurrence. (Christine Sinicki D-Milwaukee) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Um, unlike the lady from the talk, my friend here from the 12th, I am not done talking about Milwaukee cause Mr. Speaker. Generally from the 22nd, I read the bill.

[00:39:29] I don't see anything specific to NPS in this bill. Every single time we talk about education, somebody, especially a lady from the 22nd. My dear friend likes to bring up walkie public schools. And I look around this room and I think there's probably eight or nine of us on this side of the. That went to MPS.

[00:39:52] And I think there's probably even some of our members on this side of the aisle might have their children in MPS. My kids went to MPS and you know what [00:40:00] they did just fine. You know why? Because they came from,

[00:40:11] well, I don't wanna say it this way, but. What are the things that our young people need in order to be successful in school, right from the day they're born is they need people that are gonna support them. Mr. Speaker, instead of talking about testing and retesting and testing some more, why don't we talk about putting some real money where most, sorry.

[00:40:39] Why not talk about supporting these children when they're, when they are entering school. Why aren't we talking about supporting all day? K three K four K five, get him really ready to learn, to read. That would make a heck of a lot more sense than what we're talking about. Here is the speaker. Children need healthy food.[00:41:00]

[00:41:00] Children need healthy food to be successful. Why aren't we talking about that? Oh no. Nope. Can't put our money into that. Cause we have to put our money into more testing. Children need roofs over their heads. This is a speaker. This is, this is where we should be talking about supporting our children and making sure they're ready to learn.

[00:41:24] That's where it comes from. Not from testing over and over and over again. (Don Vruwink D-Milton) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, gentlemen from the 43rd on concurrence. Uh, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm speaking today, not as an expert on reading because I don't know much about how to teach reading, but I do know that I've been a lot of school districts where I've seen the school districts that have more success than not.

[00:41:52] Especially when I will go to Oregon school district. And when I was teaching there at the middle school, I had people from the community come in and they would [00:42:00] work with the kids during their study all the time. They would be sitting there reading with them for the whole time during their study hall and Oregon's test scores.

[00:42:09] I always noted was usually a lot better than every, all the other districts around them. So I, so I think that that's a good approach, but not every district can do. Um, but when I also wanted to point out is that we talk about throwing money at the problem all the time. And we talk about our reading scores keep getting worse.

[00:42:31] But if you look at spending in public schools in Wisconsin from 2002 to 2018, Wisconsin, as a state dropped from 12th to 24th in public schools, So I loved there was a correlation there, but I do know our spending on public schools decreased since 2002 to now where we ranked 24th, when we were up at ranked 12th, back in 2002 and [00:43:00] nationwide, if you look at our spending for public schools in the last 10 year or from 2008 to 2018, when they collected the data, Wisconsin spending went up 15.

[00:43:12] But nationwide spending for public schools went up 23%. So I wonder if there's a correlation. So I'm just wondering if that has something to do with it, but again, so I'm just presenting the facts on spending, but I don't claim to be an expert on reading, but I wanted you to know if we're throwing money at the problem.

[00:43:34] Other states are throwing more money at the problem, and maybe that's why they're having more success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All right. And it looks like we have one final speaker before we go to the author of the bill, gentlemen from the 19th. (Rep. Jonathan Brostoff D-Milwaukee) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, first off, I just want to correct a quick record, [00:44:00] uh, which is that we don't have.

[00:44:02] One legislator, a couple legislators that went to MPS about a 10th of this body is from NPS. So I just want to crack that. And Mr. Speaker, from the comments in the wound from the 22nd, the gentle lady, and I do want to say something I agree with though from here side, which is from the representative from the 52nd, the gentlemen spoke very earnestly and I agree with them that special education funding does cost more than general education.

[00:44:32] Uh, or special education students can cost more money. They require additional attention, additional resources, and that's exactly right. And that's exactly what this bill is not doing. Mr. Speaker, this bill gives no additional money to the problem that we all do or should agree is absolutely outrageous.

[00:44:54] And an abomination every single day, it goes on. [00:45:00] If you have a severe to fake or need a root canal, you don't keep going to the dentist and saying, Hey, give me another test. Let's see how many more times need to confirm that I need this root canal. That's ludicrous, but that's exactly what this bill is doing.

[00:45:17] Mr. Speaker, we know there's a problem and we know what the solutions are. In fact, if you were really serious about this to my colleagues across the aisle and the Republican side of. You would do the exact opposite of what you've been doing for years, instead of taking money away and starving out education and the people who need access to help the most, instead of hurting the parents and lowering the wages and attacking the people who are suffering the most in our communities, you'd be doing.

[00:45:50] But you don't care. You want to give more money to send testing more money, to test takers, more money to Foxconn and corporate welfare and all these other programs that [00:46:00] don't do a damn thing. That's where you want to spend our resources. If you really cared about the problem, you would be helping out with things like universal childcare access.

[00:46:10] That would be. You'd be spending money on lowering classroom sizes. That would be helpful if every single public school in this state had a 16 to one student to teacher ratio that would certainly help the problem. But you don't care about that. It's not about solving the problem. What you care about is more tests.

[00:46:31] You want to talk about getting flashlights or hammers or all these other tools. You can beat someone in the head with the flashlight, just it can beat, like beat them in the head with a hammer or anything else. And that's what you've been doing. It's a constant attack on our community and being part of the problem.

[00:46:48] And then asking for assessments, it's a slap in the face over the last decade of rule of single-party rule. Basically you guys have had in this state, you've [00:47:00] attacked. Our teachers taken wages away, taking benefits away. You've heard our communities you've attacked. Money coming into those communities and further subsidize our suburbs and our excerpts.

[00:47:12] And development's going further and further out. You've siphoned the resources away over and over and over and help create and worsen the problem. And now, instead of trying to solve it, you give an insulting bill like this saying, oh, we know there's a problem. Let's give more assessments. Let's test, test, test, test, test, test.

[00:47:31] Instead of providing solutions, you provide more money for testing. Why? Because you don't care about. This bill does not give a dime to helping the problems. And like I said, the representative from the 52nd, who does have some educational background is right. Special education students require additional resources.

[00:47:51] And that is not what this building. Does nothing to do it so well, I agree with what he said, and I think it's a really good point. It's almost worse [00:48:00] because a lot of you are very smart, smart enough to know what the problem is. And instead of being ignorant of the problem and not doing anything about it, instead, you are aware of the problem and actively deciding in an incredibly immoral fashion to do nothing about it.

[00:48:17] Mr. Speaker, and that is unconscious. So again, universal childcare, that's a solution making sure the parents and our communities have livable wages and raising the minimum wage. That's a solution, making sure that we have access to clean drinking water and cleaning up the lead poisoning that you're so quick to ignore.

[00:48:40] That's a solution. There are plenty of policy solutions we have, and plenty of ways to deal with this, to help our outcomes, to help our students and every day, a solutions not being found because you guys continue to, instead of working with the governor, take money out of his budget for exactly those sorts of things, because no, you want to spend [00:49:00] more money on tests.

[00:49:00] You want to give these standardized testing. People have money. In fact, Mr. Speaker, one thing about this particular bill. The initial iteration of it, and maybe the author who's going to speak next. Can talk about this a little bit and why he wrote it this way, had one private company chosen that he wanted to put in state statute to administer these.

[00:49:21] Why do we ever do something like that? Is it extremely common that you would identify one private company that might even change their name and go out of business is so egregious and they were so embarrassed. They had to change. But why was even written that way in the first place? That was the initial intent of this bill, again, because this has nothing to do with solving the problems that we all know face, Wisconsin face our children face next generation.

[00:49:48] This is instead doing the exact opposite and I find it incredibly immoral. And I hope that my Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle [00:50:00] will hear the words being said today. Change their hearts and minds and work on solving problems instead of further exacerbating them because the stakes are too high.

[00:50:10] Thank you. And with that, we will go to the author of the bill, the gentlemen from the, well, (Joel Kitchens R-Sturgeon Bay) thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was certainly an interesting spin. Um, when, when, when people ask me what my greatest fear is for the future of Wisconsin. You know, to me, I think it's the perpetuation in the increase that we have in generation generational poverty, where people are trapped in a cycle of poverty, you know, a dependence on government over and over again.

[00:50:40] Um, you know, there are a lot of factors that enter into that, certainly, but the only chance we have of breaking that cycle is educating. You know, I still believe that we are the land of opportunity and that we have greater, greater chance of upward mobility in this country than in any, in any country, in the history of the world.

[00:50:59] You know, a [00:51:00] person that is born into poverty can become anything they want. If they work hard and they have some talent, but if kids don't learn to read, it's shut off to them. The American dream is dead to those kids. So we have got to fix this problem. I'll give you a few more

figures. You've heard, you've heard a number of them already today, but in Wisconsin, 64% of fourth graders are not proficient at reading 34% of we're not even at the basic level.

[00:51:28] We have the widest gap widest gap between black and white students as has been said a few times in both fourth and eighth grade. Of the 42 states that reported the racist separately, Wisconsin was 42nd dead last and after falling, uh, they fell 31 places since 1992. During that same time white students fell from six to 20.

[00:51:56] We know that if they can't read in the fourth grade, they are far less likely to [00:52:00] graduate from high school. We know that 85% of juvenile offenders can't read and 70% of a prison inmates, more than 75% of welfare recipients, can't read at the base. At the most basic level, we are definitely in a crisis situation, Wisconsin, and it was mind boggling to hear the reading establishment come into our heads.

[00:52:23] And the, the first thing was, well, it's not really as bad as you think it is. And the second thing was we just need more money. We just need to double down on the, on the methods that we've been using that have been failing all this time. Um, now the author of the journal Sentinel article this morning, along with the representative from the 23rd, the 20th, and especially the ninth.

[00:52:46] Obviously did not watch the hearing on this bill. This is not about more testing, certainly not about standardized. Man. I don't know where that came from. What this is, is screenings that take about a minute. You can do it with [00:53:00] multiple students at the same time. And we do them several times a year to assess where the students are.

[00:53:04] We have a lot of high achieving school district in this state. I have, I'm fortunate to have several in my district that are already doing this. This is just good practice. Um, you know, this bill is, is just the first step in addressing this problem. Nobody is telling you that this is the solution to it.

[00:53:21] But if you can't identify the problem, you can't fix it. And yes, we know that we have problems, but we're not identifying those students early enough. We heard so many parents come in into our hearing and say, you know, I thought my kid couldn't read very well. And I, and I went to the school and they said, oh, just go home and read them, read to them.

[00:53:38] And then they get in the fourth grade and they get the, they, you do get the standardized sits at that point and they realize my kid can't read. And then how do they catch up? It's very, very difficult. At that point. Reading is not an intuitive process for most people, having them practice over and over and read to them.

[00:53:54] If they don't know how to do it, doesn't make it better. It's like having a bad golf swing. If you don't fix the swing, doing the same, practicing the [00:54:00] same swing over and over, doesn't make you a better. This bill is a lot more about just dyslexic students as has been said over there. The current methods that we are using fails an awful lot of students, not just those students with dyslexia.

[00:54:14] And there were a lot of states that have adopted these methods, notably, Mississippi, who was always viewed as the worst in the country, right. They they're doing very, very well now. And again, they didn't, this was, this was just the first step. And it's not the last step. And we will have to invest in teaching teachers how to do this.

[00:54:33] Our frankly, our universities have been failing us in that regard. The point that the, that the representative from the. 50 seconds had made about special ed was not that we need to be putting all these kids in special. Ed was, if we teach them how to read, we save them from special ed and we saved them a lot.

[00:54:52] And we save a lot of money down the line. I will respond quickly to what we said about why did the original bill have a couple [00:55:00] of specific companies in there? Those were given as examples of, of companies that we knew did a good job. They were never intended. And it was stated that way to be the. Um, you know, the only vendors for the, for these, for these materials.

[00:55:14] So that, that was never the intent. So I would urge you, I, and I mean this for people from the other side and I, and I really applaud the representative from the 12th. She's been so eloquent in stating this, please join us on this. This is, there's not a more important thing that we're going to deal with and teaching our young people how to read.

[00:55:30] Thank you.

[00:55:34] The question is having been read three times, shall Senate bill 4 54, be concurred. The chief clerk has a pair. We here by pair on the following questions related and concurrence of Senate bill 4 54, representative Patrick for the concurrence of Senate bill 4 54 representative reamer against the concurrence of Senate bill four 50.

[00:55:53] The gentlemen from the 93rd and gentlemen from the seventh. So refrain from voting, all those in will vote. Aye. All [00:56:00] opposed will vote. No, the clerk will open the role.

[00:56:31] have all members recorded their vote. If so the clerk will close the role. There are 62 eyes, 3,200. Uh, the bill is passed. Gentlemen from the bill is concurred in gentlemen from the 40th. Thank you, Ms. Speaker ask unanimous consent that the rules be suspended in Senate bill 4 54. Be immediately messaged as the gentlemen from the 40th ask unanimous consent that the rules be suspended and the Senate bill 4 54 being immediately messaged the Senate.

[00:56:57] Is there any objection, hearing none the bills in the [00:57:00] settlement Senate, gentlemen from the 40th? Yeah. consent that assembly bill 4 46 be laid on. The question is shall simply bill 4 46, be laid on the table without objection. It is on the table. The clerk will read the title of the next bill assembly.

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