

WELCOME TO YOUR STATE CAPITOL!

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO TRAVEL TO
MADISON AND FIGHT FOR AN ISSUE THAT IS
IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US.....THE RIGHT TO
CHOOSE THE BEST SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILDREN –
REGARDLESS OF ITS AFFILIATION.**

**SINCE WE FIRST BEGAN PURSUING PRIVATE
SCHOOL CHOICE FOR MILWAUKEE ALMOST A
DECADE AGO, FEW ISSUES HAVE STIRRED
GREATER DEBATE AND STRONGER EMOTIONS.**

**THERE HAVE BEEN FIERY LEGISLATIVE
DEBATES....THERE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSIVE
GRASSROOTS EFFORTS BY MILWAUKEE
PARENTS....AND THERE HAVE BEEN GREAT COURT
FIGHTS, SUCH AS THE ONE THAT WILL TAKE PLACE
TODAY.**

**BUT AS WE PURSUE THIS NOBLE CAUSE, WE MUST
NEVER FORGET WHO IS AT THE CENTER OF THIS
DEBATE....WHO WE ARE FIGHTING FOR WITH
SCHOOL CHOICE.**

**THIS IS ABOUT OUR CHILDREN.....NOTHING MORE,
NOTHING LESS.**

**IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL DESIRE OF PARENTS TO
MAKE SURE OUR CHILDREN RECEIVE THE BEST
EDUCATION POSSIBLE. IT IS A DESIRE THAT OUR
STATE HAS NURTURED FOR 150 YEARS WITH OUR
UNWAVERING DEDICATION TO EDUCATION.**

**WE WANT OUR CHILDREN TO LEARN....TO DEVELOP
STRONG SKILLS....TO PURSUE THEIR EVERY
DREAM AND ATTAIN THEIR EVERY GOAL....ALL OF
WHICH CANNOT HAPPEN WITHOUT STRONG
SCHOOLS.**

**SCHOOL CHOICE GIVES PARENTS A POWERFUL
TOOL IN MAKING SURE THEIR CHILD GETS A
WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION – REGARDLESS OF
THEIR INCOME AND REGARDLESS OF WHERE THEY
LIVE.**

IT IS A TOOL THAT PARENTS ARE DEMANDING....WE HAVE 1,500 CHILDREN ENROLLED IN A GREATLY CURTAILED SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM RIGHT NOW....AND WE HAVE 4,500 MORE STUDENTS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS THANKS TO PAVE.....THOUSANDS MORE PARENTS WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS PROGRAM BUT ARE AWAITING THE SUPREME COURT'S ACTION.

ALL OF THESE PARENTS CANNOT BE WRONG....

SCHOOL CHOICE GIVES LOW-INCOME PARENTS IN MILWAUKEE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES WEALTHIER PARENTS HAVE WHEN IT COMES TO EDUCATING THEIR CHILDREN.....IF WEALTHIER PARENTS ARE DISPLEASED WITH THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL, THEY CAN AFFORD TO SEND HER ELSEWHERE.....A LOW-INCOME PARENT DESERVES THAT SAME OPPORTUNITY.

RIGHT NOW, ONE-THIRD OF THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS SEND THEIR OWN CHILDREN TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS.....IF THIS OPPORTUNITY IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR OUR TEACHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN, WHY SHOULDN'T IT BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR POOR PARENTS.

WHEN IT COMES TO EDUCATION, WE DON'T NEED TO FEAR RELIGION....WE NEED TO FEAR LOW TEST SCORES....HIGH DROP-OUT RATES....LOW GRADUATION RATES....

FOR THESE ARE THE SCARY REALITIES OF EDUCATION IN MILWAUKEE RIGHT NOW....AND WE MUST TAKE STRONG AND SWIFT ACTION TO REVERSE THESE TRENDS.

SCHOOL CHOICE IS JUST ONE WAY TO HELP MAKE SURE THE STUDENTS OF MILWAUKEE RECEIVE THE VERY BEST EDUCATION POSSIBLE.....IT WILL COMPLEMENT OUR OTHER REFORMS SUCH AS HIGHER STANDARDS, A GRADUATION TEST, TECHNOLOGY, TEACHER CERTIFICATION, LOWER CLASS SIZES, MORE MONEY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION, AND THE END OF SOCIAL PROMOTION.

WE HAVE STRONG PRIVATE SCHOOLS THAT ARE SUCCEEDING EVEN IN THE LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS OF MILWAUKEE. TAKE BROTHER BOB AND MESSMER HIGH SCHOOL, WHOSE DEMOGRAPHICS MIRROR THOSE OF INNER CITY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.....AT MESSMER, HOWEVER, THE GRADUATION RATE IS 98 PERCENT AND NEARLY 90 PERCENT OF ITS STUDENTS GO ONTO COLLEGE.

MY HOPE AND MY QUEST IS TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAN ONE DAY BOAST OF THE SAME SUCCESS RATES.

MY HOPE IS THAT OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MILWAUKEE WILL BE SO STRONG ONE DAY THAT PARENTS WILL ONCE AGAIN CHOOSE TO SEND THEIR CHILD TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.....THEY WON'T NEED TO LOOK FOR ALTERNATIVES TO PUBLIC EDUCATION.

BUT UNTIL THAT DAY COMES, WE MUST GIVE LOW-INCOME PARENTS THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE A PRIVATE SCHOOL EDUCATION IF THEY DON'T BELIEVE THEIR PUBLIC SCHOOL IS MEASURING UP.

WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE ONE MORE CHILD IN MILWAUKEE TO POOR SCHOOLS. I WILL NOT STAND FOR IT.

THIS FIGHT IS FOR OUR CHILDREN.....LET'S DO THE RIGHT THING AND ALLOW PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE TO PROCEED IN MILWAUKEE.

THANK YOU.