

WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Capitol Update

March 4, 2011

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Governor Introduces 2011-13 State Budget

Governor Walker presented his budget for the 2011-13 biennium on March 1st. The Governor is proposing significant cuts in state spending to close the over \$3 billion gap between the state's current spending and the amount of revenues collected under current tax policies. The proposal, outlined in companion bills [Senate Bill 27](#) and [Assembly Bill 40](#), eliminates around \$180 million in spending of general purpose revenues (GPR) in the first year (FY 2012) of the biennium than the state currently spends. Spending will increase in the second year, however.

The budget cuts are significant. The budget reduces aid to local school districts by about \$800 million below current levels, or about eight percent of current state support. Most agencies will see a 10 percent reduction in their operational costs.

Budget issues of interest to the WCC include the following:

Education: Beyond the school aid cuts already mentioned, the budget proposal eliminates several mandates that were enacted last session affecting both public and private schools, including ones related to training certification for the administration of drugs to pupils, and school indoor environmental air quality. The budget would also limit the transportation stipend a private school family that has multiple students attending the same private school would receive when a stipend is offered in lieu of transportation services.

The proposed budget also changes the state's only private school voucher program, the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), by:

- Eliminating the 22,500 pupil cap on MPCP enrollment.
- Expanding MPCP participation to schools in Milwaukee County.

- Restoring the use of nationally-normed standardized tests in MPCP participating schools and eliminating the mandate to use the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE).
- Removing the income eligibility participation requirements for students who did not attend a MPCP participating school in the 2011-12 school year.
- Allowing schools to charge tuition above the voucher payment amount for MPCP eligible families that earn above 325% of the federal poverty level (over \$72,000 annual household income for a family of four).
- Placing new notice requirements on the Department of Public Instruction for MPCP administrative rules or policy changes.
- Maintaining MPCP payments at their 2010-11 levels.

Health Services and Medicaid: The budget requires eligible SeniorCare Prescription Drug Program participants to enroll in a Medicare Part D plan and eliminates Medicaid family planning services for men, in addition to other program changes. It also incorporates the recommendations of the Legislative Audit Bureau for the Family Care program. The proposal eliminates the state-only FoodShare program, which provides FoodShare benefits to legal residents who do not meet federal residency requirements.

Wisconsin Works: The Wisconsin Works program, or W-2, provides cash assistance and other support for families who are unable to find work. The budget reduces the maximum cash payment to W-2 families by \$20 a month. The budget also places a two-year time limit on W-2 participation in educational and training activities.

Child Care: The budget increases the copayments for families who receive child care subsidies, and adjusts the income eligibility standards for families served by the program.

Mandated Contraceptive Coverage in Health Insurance: The budget repeals the mandate that health insurers include coverage for contraceptive services in any policy offered. Under the current mandate, Catholic dioceses and others who wish to purchase health insurance policies for their employees must include coverage for these morally objectionable services.

Tuition for Immigrants: The budget bill repeals a provision that allows illegal immigrants who are qualified to enroll in the University of Wisconsin system to

qualify for resident tuition. Such students may still enroll, but may not claim resident status.

WCC staff will provide a more detailed review of the Governor's budget recommendations upon further review of the legislation. Please watch for more information in future issues of the *Capital Update*.

Register Now for *Catholics at the Capitol 2011*

The WCC is now accepting registrations for *Catholics at the Capitol 2011*, to be held Tuesday, April 5, 2011, at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison, Wisconsin. Advanced adult registration is \$37 per person and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. Full-time students can register for just \$12. The registration deadline is March 21, 2011, and the [registration form](#) is available at www.wisconsincatholic.org.

Upcoming Hearings of Interest

(N.B. Only bills of interest are flagged. In most cases, committees will be considering other bills as well.)

Assembly Aging and Long-Term Care

11:00am, Thu., March 10, 400-NE

Family Care 101: The Committee will hear from Kitty Rhoades, Deputy Secretary, Department of Health Services. The presentation will cover the basics of the Family Care Program. Questions from the members will follow the presentation. Invited speakers only to testify.

New Bills of Interest

[SB-27](#). Budget (Joint Finance) Biennial budget bill. To Joint Finance.

[AB-30](#). Child Care (Kooyenga) Delegation by a parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child of powers regarding the care and custody of the child by a power of attorney. To Children & Families.

[AB-40](#). Budget (Joint Finance) Biennial budget bill. To Joint Finance.

Web Sites of Interest

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/waml>

- Who are my legislators

[Directory of Senate Members](#)

[Directory of Assembly Members](#)

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/leginfo.html>

- 2011-12 Session Schedule
- Weekly Schedule of Committee Activities
- Senate and Assembly Daily Floor Calendar

Capitol Update is a periodic e-mail on legislative issues from the Wisconsin Catholic Conference.

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