

CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

TO: All Legislators

FROM: Sen. Kelda Roys and Reps. Ryan Clancy and Renuka Mayadev

DATE: April 30, 2025

RE: Co-Sponsorship of LRB-2409, relating to: prohibiting corporal punishment in public and private schools.

DEADLINE: Friday, May 9, 2025

RE: Stop Harmful Abuse in Education bill.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Every child deserves to be safe from abuse, including at school. Copious research shows that physically abusing children (“corporal punishment”) is harmful for children. Major medical organizations, including the American Association of Pediatrics, have long called for an end to physical abuse in schools. In fact, physical abuse isn’t just ineffective, it’s harmful for kids.

From the AAP’s Healthy Kids website:

“Decades of research have shown that physical force doesn't help kids manage difficult feelings or choose positive behaviors. In fact, family studies show that spanking, hitting and other painful punishments actually lead to more problematic behavior in kids.”

“[W]hen schools use physical pain as a way of controlling kids, research shows they are less likely to cooperate, not more. Corporal punishment has also been linked with stress, depression and low self-esteem, harming a child's chances for success in school and life.

At the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), we have a policy on physical punishment in schools, based on evidence that shows:

- Spanking, slapping and similar punishments actually lead to an increase in problem behaviors over time.

- Schools are much more likely to use physical punishments to control Black children and kids with disabilities than their peers.
- Physical punishment is closely linked with struggles in mental health, cognitive development, school achievement and many other negative outcomes for kids.”

Decades ago, Wisconsin rightly banned physical abuse in public schools, but children who go to private schools can still be subjected to violence disguised as “discipline.” This is unacceptable. No child should be abused simply because their parents send them to a private school instead of a public school. This is all the more urgent because many private schools in Wisconsin receive public funds. Taxpayer dollars should never subsidize child abuse. It’s past time for child abuse to be unacceptable in any educational setting.

To be added as a co-sponsor to LRB-2409, please respond to this email or contact Sen. Roys’ or Rep. Clancy’s office.

Deadline for Co-Sponsorship: Friday, May 9, 2025.

Co-sponsors will be added to both the Assembly and Senate version unless otherwise specified.