

SF 3977 (House file 3658) Constitutional Amendment

This Constitutional Amendment extends MN state government constitutional authority over education of “all children;” requires state to adopt “uniform achievement standards” to define “quality” for all children.

Call your State Senator and Representative!

Tell him or her you strongly oppose this measure and to vote no!

[Who Represents Me?](#)

What Is This Bill Really About?

While it may not be immediately obvious from a first reading the bill, SF 3977 (and House File 3658) would transfer authority over Minnesota’s education system from the legislature to the “state,” ultimately putting the court’s in control. It extends the authority of state bureaucrats and the courts to “all children,” which encompasses every child, no matter the age. It extends authority over curriculum, through testing outcomes, for **all schools in the state -- public, private, home schools, preschools and day care.**

All children mean “all children.” **No person is ever exempt from a constitutional right.**

See [Child Protection League overview](#) of the Senate hearing on March 6.

Please oppose this legislation.

Our Minnesota Constitution now reads:

Section 1.

“The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it is the duty of the legislature to establish a **general and uniform system of public schools.** The legislature shall make such provisions by taxation or otherwise as will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state. “

This bill will eliminate this wording in our Constitution and replace it with the following language:

Section 1. All children have a fundamental right to a quality public education that fully prepares them with the skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society, as measured against uniform **achievement standards set forth by the state.** It is a paramount duty of the state to ensure quality public schools that fulfill this fundamental right.

What changes under this new language?

This bill is designed to look harmless, but it is actually a radical change!

- **Say goodbye to local control of education.**

To require the legislature to establish “achievement standards for all children” means that the state will now dictate the curriculum for all schools. **To dictate the standards is essentially to dictate the curriculum.** Local districts will now have no significant say on the curriculum.

- **The courts will be in charge of educational policy and funding in Minnesota.**

The courts are likely to interpret “all students” to mean **all students**. The courts will quickly see that nonpublic school students are not exempted, and they will rule accordingly.

- **Since this new language says “all children,” and not “public school students,” the state will now be authorized to dictate the curriculum for nonpublic schools as well as public schools.**

The fact that the last sentence says “public schools,” does not exempt nonpublic education from this new “constitutional right.” If these new standards are a constitutional right for all children, the state can and will require any and all schools to meet the standards. There are no constitutional rights that private schools are exempted from meeting! This bill does not exempt private schools!

- **We don’t know who will be determining what it means to be “fully prepared”? Who decides what we will be measuring?**

Which special interest groups of the day will be in the driver’s seat?

- **Since this new language says “all children,” and not “all students,” the state will now dictate curriculum for day care and pre-school including private day care and private pre-school.**

A highly controversial “Parent Aware Rating System” is already being driven through the Minnesota legislature. Under these bills (HF1/SF3606) taxpayers will subsidize both public and private options that comply with state standards (which are also federal and UN standards), putting government fully in charge of how our children from birth to kindergarten are taught and raised. Issues among others involve discipline, food, playtime, and content children will be required to learn. Inevitably this will extend to religious teaching. Private day care options that do not comply with the standards are even now being driven out of business because they cannot compete with public subsidies. See [“Legislature to Lock-in Parent Aware Child Care Rating System.”](#) The amendment will establish state control as a constitutional right.

Note: Please see the [article by Katherine Kersten](#) in the Star Tribune, February 8, 2020.