



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Representative Angelina Cruz (D-Racine) introduces “Keep Our Promise” legislation on special education reimbursement.**

**RACINE** — Representative Angelina Cruz (D–Racine), a long-time public school teacher, introduced legislation today to hold the state accountable for meeting the special education reimbursement levels promised in the current budget. The “Keep Our Promise on Special Education Reimbursement Act” guarantees sum-sufficient funding for 42% of eligible special education costs in the current school year and 45% in 2026–27.

“Imagine your employer choosing to pay you for less than half of the work you’ve done,” said Rep. Cruz. “That’s the position we’re putting our public schools in. This level of reimbursement is not what our schools want or need, and it’s not what our children with disabilities deserve. At the very least, we must keep our promise. If Republicans were serious about providing 42% and 45% reimbursement this biennium, they now have the opportunity to prove it.”

Underfunding special education reimbursement — even below promised levels — is not new, but this budget cycle drew significant public attention to the issue. On November 17, the Department of Public Instruction announced that reimbursement from November through March will be just 35%, a serious blow to already struggling public school districts.

The “Keep Our Promise” legislation eliminates the instability created by the current sum-certain appropriation, which leaves school leaders knowing the state will fail to meet promised reimbursement levels but unable to predict the size of the shortfall.

“We’ve been making it harder for public schools to do their job,” Cruz said. “For more than a decade, our schools have weathered chronic disinvestment. Our kids, teachers, and communities have paid the price. In Racine, taxpayers recently saw a 19% property tax increase due to the majority party’s unwillingness to fund public education. We are constitutionally mandated to fund our public schools, yet we’ve continued shifting taxpayer dollars to private schools — including the 90% special education reimbursement provided to private voucher schools. That’s unacceptable.”

Rep. Cruz noted that every Democratic member of the Legislature has signed on to the bill. “I’m proud to have the full support of my Democratic colleagues. I look forward to the day when, through real leadership, we fully fund our public schools and invest in our kids, our communities, and our future.

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