



## **McFadden, Ciresi, King: Page Amendment is a radically different approach to solve our worst-in-the-nation education gap**

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The public education system in the state of Minnesota is in crisis, which means the entire state is in crisis.

A recent report from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis found that Minnesota has some of the worst education gaps by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status in the nation. The education gaps have persisted for over two decades and touch every single county in the state.

But, you may have already known that. State legislators know about the worst-in-the-nation gaps. Many Minnesotans have heard of or know about the worst-in-the-nation gaps. The gaps have gone untouched and unclosed despite this common knowledge. Most have widened.

Education gaps are a moral stain on the state of Minnesota, so why do the gaps go untouched and unclosed?

Politics.

Since the mid-'80s, there has been no progress made toward a political solution to address education gaps. Republicans want school choice while Democrats want more funding, and the two parties argue past each other until the chance for bold, transformative education reform is dead in the waters of partisan gridlock.

It can no longer be about what one party wants; it needs to be about what the people of Minnesota want. We want to stop losing generation after generation of Minnesota children to a political system that refuses to solve our education crisis.

Minnesota needs the Page Amendment. The Page Amendment is a proposed amendment to the Minnesota state constitution that would provide every child with a civil right to quality public education.

The Page Amendment is a radically different approach to education policy that is designed to circumvent the partisan gridlock that has derailed progress. It intentionally does not address prescriptive remedies. Rather, it focuses on the value that unites us most: children, and their right to access quality public education.

Why a civil right? The establishment of a civil right for all Minnesota children will create a strong catalyst to action for lawmakers. Civil rights are powerful because they cannot be violated. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle will no longer be able to hide behind their partisan arguments, but will be compelled to prioritize education reform at the Capitol. The Legislature will be compelled to action and required to reform the system to provide access to quality public education for all our children. If they don't, they'll violate the rights of over 1.2 million school-aged Minnesotans and the courts will have to step in.



In the current and intensely partisan political environment, the Page Amendment is unique because it is more than an education policy, it is a values statement. It unites Minnesotans across partisan and geographical divides, centering around a common value: that every child deserves a right to access quality public education. The amendment's focus on children unifies us all. We all wish for a better future for our children. We can make that future together.

*Mike McFadden, Michael Ciresi and Louis King are board members of Our Children MN, the bipartisan coalition supporting the Page Amendment. McFadden is a businessman and former Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate for the state of Minnesota. Ciresi is a partner at Ciresi Conlin LLP and co-founded the Ciresi Walburn Foundation. King serves as president and CEO of Summit Academy OIC and is a U.S. Army veteran.*