 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

[Home](#) » [News](#) » [Politics](#)

 Politics

Latino leaders protest Senate's removal of immigrant provisions

By [Georgia Pabst](#) of the Journal Sentinel

Posted: June 17, 2009

Leaders in Milwaukee's Latino community expressed outrage Wednesday that state Sen. Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) and other Democrats removed provisions in the state budget that would allow some undocumented students to pay in-state college tuition and let illegal immigrants obtain certificates to drive legally.

Both measures had passed the Assembly and are included in the governor's budget. Voces de la Frontera, an immigrants' rights group, and supporters have written hundreds of postcards and lobbied hard for both measures that were spearheaded in Madison by Rep. Pedro Colón (D-Milwaukee), the lone Latino in the Legislature.

But late Tuesday the Senate Democratic caucus removed both. Christine Neumann-Ortiz, the director of Voces, said she was told that Carpenter told legislators that Latinos in his district were opposed to both measures.

"It's an absolute disgrace and unbelievable that he would make such a statement," she said during a hastily called news conference Wednesday morning.

Carpenter, who represents a district with a large Latino population, said Wednesday afternoon that the driver's license proposal should be a separate bill and not inserted into a two-year budget bill "in the middle of the night." He added that the plan "needs work."

In a brief interview, he did not address in-state tuition, which he has supported in the past. He could not be reached despite numerous other attempts through his office, and his staff could not direct a reporter to Latino constituents who oppose the measures.

"Education is the bridge to the 21st century, and never did I think Sen. Carpenter would stand in the way of education&ensp.&ensp.," said Ricardo Diaz, the director the United Community Center, which houses the Bruce Guadalupe School. "Senator, you need to move away from the front door and allow these children to get in."

Ald. James Witkowiak, who represents the largely Latino south side district, said, "These people are my neighbors and my friends, and they are here to stay. They should be allowed to drive and get educational

opportunities the same as anyone else."

Milwaukee School Board member Larry Miller added: "Shame on you, Senator Carpenter. This is an outrage. Our job is to support our students, and in-state tuition and driver's licenses are fundamental rights."

The driving certificate could not be used as federal identification at airports, but would holders to drive legally. It's been backed by a number of law enforcement officials, including Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn.

Steven Walters of the Journal Sentinel's Madison bureau contributed to this report.



NewsWatch Delivered

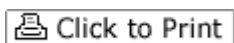
Get the latest local news delivered to your inbox M-F at 2:00 pm..

[Sign up Today](#) | [View Sample](#)

[Sign up Today](#) | [View Sample](#)

Find this article at:

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/statepolitics/48253547.html>



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.