

June 2, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Chairman
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Chairman Crapo,
and Ranking Member Wyden:

We are 82 faith community organizations, denominations, and congregations representing more than 3.6 million people, and 349 faith leaders from across the United States. We write to express our strong opposition to private school vouchers, and in particular the inclusion of the Educational Choice for Children Act or Qualified Elementary and Secondary Education Scholarships provision in budget reconciliation.

This provision would create a national voucher program that would divert more than \$20 billion of federal tax dollars to private schools and families who homeschool. We oppose this legislation because vouchers violate the foundational principle of religious freedom. This proposal will benefit the wealthy while harming our public schools, our students, and our communities, and it will undermine our houses of worship.

There are so many reasons to oppose private school vouchers. They harm public schools, which educate 90% of American schoolchildren and are vital to our country and our democracy. Moreover, they primarily go to wealthy families; don't improve student achievement; lack accountability, leading to frequent waste and fraud; fund discrimination; underserve students with disabilities; and can exacerbate racial segregation. They harm rural communities and don't offer a real alternative for most families.

Vouchers violate religious freedom, which is a cornerstone of our democracy. Religious freedom protects every American by ensuring that the government cannot force any of us to pay for someone else's religious education. Yet taxpayer-funded vouchers primarily go to religious schools. Vouchers also threaten the autonomy of religious schools by opening them up to government audits, control, and interference. The responsibility for religious education belongs to families, houses of worship, and other religious institutions — we do not need or want the government to be involved.

This provision would fund vouchers through a harmful \$20-billion tax credit scheme. It would allow individuals to receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit in exchange for giving money to an intermediary organization, which then would funnel that money to private school tuition and homeschooling costs. Even worse, wealthy people could actually make money by offloading stocks to avoid capital gains tax while also receiving a tax credit for both the value of the stock and their realized gains. This would essentially create a direct transfer of taxpayer funds away from the public trust and into private schools. The only people who win in this scenario are wealthy, sophisticated investors who would make money while our students lose.

This tax credit scheme will inevitably harm charities doing good work in our communities, including our houses of worship. Because this provision financially incentivizes giving money to private school vouchers over donations to charities, people would be less likely to give to their congregations, veterans organizations, homeless shelters, and food banks. Our faith communities, which do meaningful, important work to help both their congregants and their neighbors, will suffer.

Because of our rich tapestry of beliefs, we cannot sit idly by and allow a policy that would line the pockets of the wealthy at the expense of our children and our faith communities. We therefore come together to urge you to reject any effort to include private school vouchers in the reconciliation process.

Thank you.

All Saints/Todos los Santos Catholic Church, Tulsa, OK
Alliance of Baptists
American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin
American Conference of Cantors
Anthony's Plot Community, Winston-Salem, NC
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
Blue Ocean Faith Columbus, OH
Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Boise, ID
Boone Memorial Presbyterian Church, Caldwell, ID
Carolina Jews for Justice
Central Baptist Church, Lexington, KY
Christ United Church, Olmsted Falls, OH
Church of One Love, Farmers Branch, TX
Church of the Trinity Metropolitan Community Church, Sarasota, FL
College Hill Presbyterian Church, Tulsa, OK
Collegiate United Methodist Church & Wesley Foundation, Ames, IA
Commonwealth Baptist Church, Alexandria, VA
A Community of the Servant-Savior Presbyterian Church, Houston, TX
Congregation Beth Israel, Portland, OR
Congregations 4 Children - North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Emanuel Synagoge, Oklahoma City, OK
Episcopal Diocese of Iowa
Episcopal Diocese of Missouri
Fairfield Friends Meeting, Camby, IN
Faith Commons
Faith in Action Network
Faithful America
Fellowship Congregational Church United Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
Fellowship Southwest
First Baptist Church, Lumberton, NC
First Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Boise, ID
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Manhattan, KS
Forest Park Christian Church, Tulsa, OK
Friends Congregational United Church of Christ, College Station, TX
Friends General Conference
Galileo Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Fort Worth, TX
Good Faith Media
Grace Presbyterian Church, Walnut Creek, CA
Faith in Action Network
Immanuel Baptist Church, Frankfort, KY
Interfaith Alliance
Interfaith Alliance of Iowa
Interfaith Alliance of Southwest Florida
Interfaith Worker Justice - New Mexico
Kyrie Pub Church, Fort Worth, TX
Makom Shelanu Congregation, Fort Worth, TX
Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ, Oklahoma City, OK
Men of Reform Judaism
Metropolitan Community Church of the Quad Cities, Davenport, IA
Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
National Council of Jewish Women
New Beginnings Christian Church, Urbandale, IA
The Old Catholic Diocese of Mid-America
One River Foundation
Pastors for Children
Pastors For Florida Children
Pastors for Indiana Children
Pastors for Kentucky Children
Pastors for NC Children
Presbytery of New York City, NY
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Riverside Church at Park and King, Jacksonville, FL
Riverside Church Tampa Bay, St. Petersburg, FL

Southeastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Goldsboro, NC

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Monrovia, CA

St. Luke Lutheran Church, Ocean Isle Beach, NC

St. Peter's Evangelical United Church of Christ, Kewanee, IL

Together for Hope

Union for Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Association

Unitarian Universalist Community of El Paso, TX

United Church of Christ

United Women in Faith

University Baptist Church, Austin, TX

University Christian Church, Hyattsville, MD

Urbandale United Church of Christ, Urbandale, IA

WestWind Church, Keller, TX

Women of Reform Judaism

Rev. Candace Adams, MO

Rev. Alyssa Aldape, VA

Rev. Dr. Sarah Allen, TX

Cantor Sheri Allen, TX

Rev. Marty Anderson, VA

Rev. Robin Anderson, VA

Pastor Jenny Archer, OK

Rabbi Charles Arian, MD

Rabbi Melanie Aron, DC

Rev. Todd Atkins, MA

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Baker-Smith, VA

Rev. Dr. Gerritt Baker-Smith, VA

Rev. Jeremiah Banks, KY

Rev. Aiden Barnes, VA

Rev. Rebecca Barnes, KY

Rabbi Robert Barr, OH

Chaplain Roy Bates, NY

Dr. Ramon Batts, IN

Rev. Dr. Layne Beamer, TX

Rev. Rebecca Bean, NC

Rev. Andrew Bear, CA

Rev. Dr. Holly Beaumont, NM

Rev. Dr. Jay Beavers, TX

Rabbi Shelley Kovar Becker, NY

Rev. Dr. Beverlee Bell, IA

Rev. Glen Bengson, OH

Rev. Brad Bennett, NC

Rev. Dr. Rick Bennett, TN

Rev. Bethany Benz-Whittington, TN

Rabbi Linda Bertenthal, IA

Rev. Dr. Larry Bethune, TX

Rev. Elizabeth Bier, WI

Leslie Bloyer, NY

Carol Blythe, MD

Rev. Kayla Bonewell, OK

Phyllis Boozer, CT

Pastor David Borger Germann, IA

Rev. Debbie Braaksma, KY

Rev. Jake Bradley, IL

Rev. Dr. Mark Bradley, IL

Elizabeth Branch, AR

Rev. Lindsey Braun, IA

Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth, WA

Rev. Collette Broady Grund, WI

Rev. Dr. Candice Brown, IA

Rev. Ben Brucker, CA

Rev. Molly Brummett Wudel, NC

Rev. Beth Buckwalter-Miller, MN

Rev. Jessica Cain, TX

Rev. Dr. Dennis Carpenter, WI

Rev. Kyle Carswell, IA
Caleb Carter, NC
Mary Carver, TX
Rev. Kyle Caudle, NC
Rev. Jonathan Chacko, AL
Rev. Canon Peg Chamberlin, MN
Dr. Danny Chisholm, TN
Jay Clem, CA
Rev. Jeni Markham Clewell, OK
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Rev. Charles Conkin, KY
Rev. Margaret Conley, GA
John Corpus, TX
Rev. David Cozart, TX
Rev. Rebecca Craver, NC
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Rev. Chris Crowley, VA
Rev. Sarah Crowther-Dixon, TX
Dr. David Currie, TX
Amy Dalhausser, TX
Rev. Dr. Teresa Danielely, MO
Rev. Kathleen Davies, TX
Rev. Jennifer Davis, TX
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Rev. Jeanne Devine, TX
Connie Deweese, TX
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Rev. Mary Downey, FL
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Rev. Allison Drake, TX
Melodie Elliott, TX
Rev. Hana Elliott, IN
Rev. Charles Esper, SC
Rev. Dr. Leonard Ezell, LA
Dr. Emily Falis, TX
Dr. Melissa Fallen, VA
Fr. Joseph Farnes, ID
Rev. Sharon Felton, KY
Dr. Keith Felton, KY
Pastor David Ferguson, CO

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Rev. Patsy Fine, CA
Rabbi Daniel Fink, ID
Rev. Sheila Fiorella, TX
Rev. Sara Fisher, MD
Rev. Marnie Fisher-Ingram, VA
Rabbi Joshua Fixler, TX
Rev. Dr. Shannon Fleck, OK
Claire Flores, TX
Janet Follstaedt, TX
Rev. Deanne Ford, AL
Rev. Katrina Forman, NJ
Rev. Todd Freeman, OK
Brian Frick, NY
Dana Friedel, TX
Rev. Eric Fulcher, LA
Rev. Dr. Kevin Gardner-Sinclair, KY
Rev. K. Garland, AZ
Pastor Buddy Gharring, ID
Rev. Twila Gibbens, OK
Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert, NY
Rev. Lizzie Gillman, IA
Rev. Dr. John Gilmore, PA
Rev. Dr. Daniel Glaze, VA
Rev. James T. Golden, FL
Rev. H. Julian Gordy, TN
Rev. Dr. Cassandra Gould, DC
Rev. Adam Gray, FL
Patsy Green, LA
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Rev. Kerry Greenhill, VA
Rabbi Steven Gross, TX
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Mary Guarino, NC
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LeAnn Hampton, TX
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Rev. Paul Larson, IL
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Dr. Arch Mayfield, TX
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Joel McCoy, TX
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Rev. Lauren McDuffie, KY
Georgia McKee, TX
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Rev. Katelyn McWilliams, TX
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Rev. Kirt Moelling, OK
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Bishop Betsey Monnot, IA
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Pastor Janis Montgomery, OH
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Rev. Chris Moore, OK

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Karen Nelson, OR
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Rev. Dr. Joanne Sizoo, SC
Rev. Britt Skarda, AR
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Robin Smith, TX
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Marty Susie, GA
Rev. Les Switzer, TX
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Keith Wimmersberger, IN
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Rev. Dr. Lisa Wolfe, OK
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Deaconess Diana Woods, TX
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Charles Yarbrough, TX
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Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese, TX
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Rev. Andrew Zipperer, TN