

Statement for the Record on the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education's hearing: School Choice: Expanding Educational Freedom for All

Today, the Republican led Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education of the Education and the Workforce Committee held a hearing pushing their private school voucher and school privatization agenda.

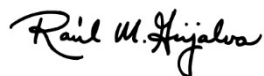
Under the guise of school choice, Republicans want to expand the spending of public dollars on private schools. Sadly, this intentional degradation of public schools by Republican legislators was on full display at today's hearing.

I know all too well the impact of private school voucher expansion programs. Arizona was one of the first states to enact legislation resulting in extreme deregulation of voucher programs. While Republicans claimed that this would bring opportunity to marginalized students, the reality is far from it. Over 70% of Arizona voucher recipients have never attended public schools and largely use vouchers on private schools that they were already attending. This flow of public dollars to private schools reduces academic accountability and fiscal responsibility – two things that my colleagues across the aisle state that they value.

Beyond issues of funding, private school voucher programs also lead to the exclusion of students that need nurturing school environments. This again has been experienced in my state of Arizona where there have been reports of gay parents being excluded from their child's private school -- one that was receiving state voucher program funds.

All children should have the option of attending an academically and socially enriching local public school. The false promise of opportunity presented by private school vouchers works to oppose this. That's why I stand in opposition to the Republican's private school voucher agenda.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raul M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress