

Representative Aaron Bean
Chair
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary,
and Secondary Education
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Suzanne Bonamici
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary,
and Secondary Education
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

April 25, 2023

Dear Chair Bean and Ranking Member Bonamici:

On behalf of the National Parent Teacher Association (National PTA), we thank you for holding the hearing on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 “School Choice: Expanding Educational Freedom for All” and appreciate the opportunity to submit this letter for the record.

National PTA represents millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders across all 50 states, Washington D.C., the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and DoDEA schools in Europe. As the nation’s oldest and largest child advocacy organization, PTA is a powerful voice for all children, and our members are committed to making every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

National PTA recognizes that changes must be made within the public schools to provide an equitable and excellent educational opportunity for every child. However, vouchers, tax credits, deductions and other such funding sources do not provide the means for bringing about improvements in our public schools. It is during this challenging time that the federal government should focus on providing more resources to our public schools, which serve the vast majority of our nation’s students, particularly students from under-resourced communities and students of color.

We disagree completely that Congress should divert public money into any private school choice proposal and/or voucher system, including the District of Columbia private school voucher program. Although sometimes well intentioned, private school choice systems can have detrimental effects on our public school systems which serve around 50 million children across the country or 90% of our nation’s students. Moreover, many voucher programs have proven ineffective in improving students’ academic achievement, lack accountability, deprive students of the rights and protections they would receive in public schools, and fail in providing adequate services for students most in need, including students with disabilities, low-income students, and students who are English learners. Such funding would promote division without diversity, create division and separation within current school communities and negate the long, historic struggle of our nation to desegregate our schools and our society. It is the opinion of the National PTA that vouchers and similar systems would violate the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state in some cases.

It is for these reasons that our association opposes education voucher proposals for public and nonpublic preschool, elementary and secondary school students. Our association also opposes tax credits and deductions for elementary and secondary school tuition and other education-related expenses for public and nonpublic school students. Instead, Congress must not abandon public

education and should focus on the improvement of public education for all children. Any changes in school structure or funding should be measured by the likely outcomes for all children in accord with the obligation to prepare all children to become effective, productive adult citizens. That is why public dollars must remain invested in public schools for the benefit of all students and for the future of our nation.

At the same time, we know that no one educational program is best for all children. Our association works every day with public school personnel and parents to address the different ways that children learn and to improve how public school systems can provide the best education for all children. National PTA supports educational choices within public schools and believes that parents should be involved in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of public school choice plans. We also acknowledge charter schools as one of many avenues to improving student achievement and support charter schools, as outlined in our association's [Position Statement on Public Charter Schools](#).

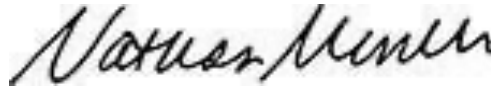
National PTA supports our nation's public education system as the major vehicle for perpetuating the basic values of our democratic system of government. This system must be strengthened and continue to be governed by public officials accountable to the public and supported by adequate funding in order to operate successfully.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this letter for the record in response to the hearing on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 "School Choice: Expanding Educational Freedom for All" within the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education. We look forward to working with your offices and members of the Subcommittee to ensure that public funds are not diverted to any private school choice proposal and/or voucher system and to improve public education for all children in our nation. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact Kate Clabaugh, National PTA Director of Government Affairs, at kclabaugh@pta.org.

Sincerely,



Anna King
President
National PTA



Nathan R. Monell, CAE
Executive Director
National PTA