



April 18, 2023

The Honorable Aaron Bean

Chair

Early Childhood, Elementary, & Secondary
Education Subcommittee

Committee on Education & the Workforce
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici

Ranking Member

Early Childhood, Elementary, & Secondary
Education Subcommittee

Committee on Education & the Workforce
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Hearing on "School Choice: Expanding Educational Freedom for All"

Dear Chairman Bean and Ranking Member Bonamici:

The 34 undersigned members of the National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE) submit this letter for the April 18, 2023 hearing on "School Choice: Expanding Education Freedom for All" to express our strong opposition to private school vouchers. We believe that public money should fund public education, and we urge you to oppose any legislation that would create or expand private school voucher programs.

Although promoted as "school choice," private school vouchers do not provide real choice to students and parents. The "choice" in voucher programs actually lies with the private schools, which may turn students away for a variety of reasons often including disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, academic achievement, and economic status.

In contrast, public schools are open to all. Public schools educate nearly 90% of our country's students and are a cornerstone of our communities. Private school voucher programs undermine our nation's public schools by diverting desperately needed resources away from the public school system to fund the education of a few, select students in private, often religious, schools.

Private school vouchers fail to improve students' academic achievement. Indeed, they often cause students to perform worse than their peers who aren't in the voucher program: recent studies of the Louisiana, Indiana, Ohio, and Washington, DC, programs show that voucher students experienced significant declines in their academic performance.¹ The impact of accepting a voucher on academic achievement in these

¹ R. Joseph Waddington & Mark Berends, Impact of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program: Achievement Effects for Students in Upper Elementary & Middle School, 37 *J. of Policy Analysis & Mgmt.* 4, 738-808 (Aug. 2018); Atilla Abdulkadiroğlu, Parag A. Pathak & Christopher R. Walters, Free to Choose: Can School Choice Reduce Student Achievement?, 10 *Am. Econ. Journal: Applied Econ.* 1, 175-206 (Jan. 2018); David Figlio & Krzysztof Karbownik, Evaluation of Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship Program: Selection, Competition, & Performance Effects, *Fordham Inst.* (July 2016); U.S. Dep't of Educ., Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts Two Years After Students Applied (June 2018).



Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
African American Ministers In Action
American Atheists
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers
American Humanist Association
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
The Arc of the United States
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC)
Center for Inquiry (CFI)
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of the Great City Schools
Feminist Majority Foundation
Freedom From Religion Foundation
GLSEN
In the Public Interest
Interfaith Alliance
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
National Association of School Psychologists
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Education Association
National Rural Education Advocacy Collaborative
National Rural Education Association
Network for Public Education
Public Funds Public Schools
The Secular Coalition for America
SPLC Action Fund
Union for Reform Judaism