

# The National Coalition

*for*

## Public Education

July 18, 2013

Re: NCPE opposes any amendments to H.R. 5, "The Student Success Act," that would permit federally funded private school vouchers.

Dear Representative:

**The undersigned members of the National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE) write to express our strong opposition to any amendments to H.R. 5, "The Student Success Act," that would allow the expenditure of scarce federal funds on private school vouchers.**

Vouchers run counter to the very purpose of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Instead of providing equal access to high quality education or setting high standards and accountability, voucher programs have proven ineffective, lack accountability to taxpayers, and deprive students of rights provided to public school students.

At a time when Congress is attempting to reduce spending, it is poor public policy to funnel taxpayer funds away from public schools and toward private schools. Vouchers divert desperately-needed resources away from the public school system to fund the education of a few, select voucher students, with limited, if any, real impact on student academic achievement. Congress better serves *all* children by using funds to make the public schools stronger and safer than by creating a new voucher program.

Vouchers support schools that are not bound by the open and non-discriminatory acceptance policies that are a unifying factor among the diverse range of ethnic and religious communities of our society and a strength of our public school system. Public schools serve any and all students that walk through the school house doors, regardless of race, religion, disability, or income.

Vouchers deprive students of rights and protections they are awarded in public schools. Despite receiving public money, private schools that participate in voucher programs are not subject to all federal civil rights laws and do not face the same public accountability standards that all public schools must meet, including those in Title IX, IDEA, and ESEA—the very law the House seeks to reauthorize.

Vouchers do not improve student education. According to multiple studies of the District of Columbia, Milwaukee, and Cleveland school voucher programs, students offered vouchers do not perform better in reading and math than students in public schools. Vouchers do not receive proper oversight, accountability, or internal controls. Most voucher programs are plagued with accountability problems, as they do not have to adhere to the same standards set for public schools.

Voucher programs primarily fund private religious schools. To both protect the religious freedom of taxpayers and the autonomy of religious schools, many of our coalition members object to taxpayer money being used to fund religious education.

**For these reasons and more, NCPE opposes any amendments that would permit a voucher program in H.R. 5, "The Student Success Act." ESEA should ensure that public dollars remain invested in public schools and that no ESEA funds may be used for private school vouchers.**

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

African American Ministers In Action  
American Association of School Administrators  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)  
American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA), AFL-CIO  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Humanist Association  
American Jewish Committee (AJC)  
Americans for Democratic Action  
Americans for Religious Liberty  
Americans United for Separation of Church and State  
Anti-Defamation League  
ASPIRA Association, Inc.  
Association of Educational Service Agencies  
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty  
Center for Inquiry  
Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Council of the Great City Schools  
Disciples Justice Action Network  
Equal Partners in Faith  
Family and Children's Ministries, Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Feminist Majority  
Freedom From Religion Foundation  
Hindu American Foundation  
Institute for Science and Human Values  
Interfaith Alliance  
International Reading Association  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
NA'AMAT USA  
National Alliance of Black School Educators  
NAACP  
National Association for Bilingual Education  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Organization for Women

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National Parent Teacher Association  
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition  
National Rural Education Association  
National School Boards Association  
People For the American Way  
Public Education Network  
Secular Coalition for America  
School Social Work Association of America  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries  
Women of Reform Judaism