OPPOSE THE D.C. VOUCHER PROGRAM

DC Vouchers Do Not Work:
• According to reports issued by the Department of Education in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2017, 2018, and 2019: The D.C. voucher program has proven ineffective and has led to neither higher academic achievement nor increased satisfaction. The 2017 and 2018 reports also found that use of a voucher led to lower test scores in math for students in the program.

DC Vouchers Harm Students:
• Students in the voucher program are less likely to get the same educational resources as students not in the voucher program, including ESL programs, learning support and special needs programs, tutors, counselors, cafeterias, and nurse’s offices. This especially harms students with disabilities, who often attend private schools without fewer services, and schools that do not have to follow each student’s IEP.

• A 2017 Washington Post investigation revealed that one in five voucher schools do not serve students with learning disabilities, half do not serve students with physical disabilities, and two-thirds do not serve students learning English as a second language.

DC Vouchers Strip Students of Civil Rights Protections:
• Private schools participating in the D.C. voucher program do not abide by the same civil rights laws and public accountability standards as public schools, including those in Title V and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and the DC Human Rights Act.

• Students who attend private schools with vouchers are stripped of their First Amendment, Due Process, and other constitutional and statutory rights provided to them in public schools.

DC Vouchers Do Not Help Students in Need:
• Not a single study has found that students from “schools in need of improvement,” which are the students targeted by the program, have shown improvement in reading or math due to the voucher program.

• Since 2003, over $200 million has been spent on D.C. voucher schools. That is money that could have been spent on District public schools – schools that serve all students.

DC Vouchers Lack Accountability to Taxpayers:
• At one point, the voucher program’s administrator admitted that “quality oversight of the program [w]as sort of a dead zone, a blind spot.” A special investigation by the Washington Post corroborated findings that private schools in the program lacked important quality controls: these schools were sometimes operated in old worn-down facilities without proper amenities such as gymnasiums or restrooms.

• According to U.S. Government Accountability Office reports from both 2007 and 2013, the D.C. voucher program has repeatedly failed to meet basic and even statutorily required accountability standards: It did not provide adequate information about voucher schools to prospective parents and students and did not make that information available until after many voucher schools’ deadlines for admission had passed. It also failed to maintain its own financial records, did not enforce statutory requirements such as requiring each school to maintain valid certificates of occupancy, and did not have a protocol for ensuring compliance from participating schools.