Oppose Efforts to Divert Public Education Dollars to Students in Private Schools and Homeschools

General Talking Points

Prioritization of federal funding
- Congress should prioritize funding and support for public schools, which serve all students, rather than siphoning funds to unaccountable private schools and homeschools.

Used to fund discrimination
- Although promoted as "educational freedom," private school vouchers do not provide real freedom of 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.
- Students who attend private schools with vouchers are also stripped of protections for their civil rights and liberties, including First Amendment, due process, and other constitutional and statutory rights.
- Public schools are open to all. They educate nearly 90% of our country’s students and are a cornerstone of our communities.

Lack of accountability and efficacy
- Voucher programs often lack even the most basic accountability standards and oversight requirements to ensure that taxpayer money is not being wasted. They frequently do not require participating schools to meet any baseline standard for teacher qualification, student testing, financial accountability, or even safe facilities.
- 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: large-scale studies of the Louisiana, Indiana, Ohio, and Washington, DC, programs show that voucher students experienced significant declines in their academic performance.

Benefit wealthy Americans
- In Florida after the expansion of its voucher program in 2023, 44% of the new students are from households that made more than double the median household income in the state. In Arizona, more than half of voucher students came from the wealthiest quarter of zip codes in the state, with median incomes ranging from $81,000 to $178,000. During the 2022-2023 school year, voucher recipients in Indiana were more likely to come from families that made more than $100,000 per year than families that made less than $50,000 per year.
Oppose Legislation that will Funnel Public Money to Private Schools and Home Schools

- Creating a federal K-12 tuition tax credit voucher or expanding the use of 529 accounts for families who homeschool would forgo tax dollars that could be used to fund public schools and instead direct federal dollars toward children already engaged in private education and homeschooling.

- Parents are free to educate their child in private, religious schools and home schools, but lawmakers should not subsidize these programs with public dollars, particularly when parents already fund them themselves.
  - For example, In Arkansas, 95% of the participants in the state’s universal voucher program had never attended public schools before receiving a voucher.
  - Eighty percent of voucher recipients in Arizona never attended public schools; 89% of voucher recipients in New Hampshire never attended public schools and 75% of voucher recipients in Wisconsin never attended public schools.

- 529 savings plans are inaccessible to low- and middle-income families.

- Expanding 529 accounts even further for private school expenses and homeschooling would disproportionately benefit families with high incomes because tax breaks delivered in the form of a reduction in taxable income are more valuable for those in higher tax brackets and with higher tax burdens.

- Expanding 529 accounts for homeschooling families forces the public to take on a brand-new expense that limits tax dollars from flowing to other core services that benefit the vast majority of Americans such as greater funding for police forces, park services, and the post office.

- 529 expansions will provide a new tax break for high-wealth families who already enroll their children in private schools or homeschools.

Taken together, a tuition tax credit voucher coupled with a tax break for families that attend homeschool and private school would have harmful effects on the education of children.