

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Education
For HJR 182

Compiled on: Wednesday, April 12, 2023 2:45 AM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: April 11, 2023 8:00 AM

Kim Buttrum
Myself
League City, TX

As an educator, I am adamantly in support of public education and strengthening that revered institution - and adamantly against these lame attempts to knock it down by promoting privatization. Privatizing public education has shown time & again to be short sighted and an abject failure. We should instead be increasing funding to public schools, funding that has been siphoned away over the years by these same politicians.

Jolie Willis
Self
Austin, TX

This joint resolution, if approved, would be in direct violation of our state constitution. I am opposed to this measure.

David McCardle
self
Katy, TX

Please protect public education in Texas. Vote against any school voucher programs or any other bills allowing tax dollars to be used for private and/or religious schools. Do not allow religious indoctrination in Texas Public schools.

Tracy Wuster
Self/Teacher
Austin / Central Texas, TX

I am opposed to this bill that would hurt public school funding and public school children.

Heather Jenkins
Self
Waco, TX

I do not support.

Heather Peterson

Self- lawyer

Houston, TX

I strongly oppose school vouchers. I can afford private schools but send my two students to HISD because I am a big believer in public education. Our schools need funding and do not need funding and students removed from the public school system. Vouchers are not the solution!

Leticia Ochoa

Self-parent

Houston, TX

I support properly funded public education. I am opposed to vouchers. Instead of trying to funnel dollars and incentivize families away from public schools, I wish our leaders would think of what is best for all children and focus on providing additional funding for quality public education.

Linda Litzinger

Texas Parent to Parent - Public Policy Specialist, and self (public policy specialist)

Austin, TX

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Texas Parent to Parent is a statewide non-profit serving 14,000 families who have children with any type of disability, mental health or special healthcare need. We are against all educational savings account or voucher bills including HJR182. Thank you.

Ruth Torres
self
DALLAS, TX

Vouchers are Billion's in annual funding and a TRILLION \$ pubic land grab. Taxpayers will be paying for private owned lands while existing public schools decline, are abandoned and sold off to become anything in our neighborhoods. When students are rejected or expelled, they keep the money and where is the kid supposed to go, there is no longer a public school option. 20 years will go by before people fully comprehend the con with a destroyed public education system & the politicians pushing for it will be richly retired. Vouchers & charters are unregulated, underperformers are expanding and simply change their name & keep operating with parents unaware.

Charters & vouchers are UNINFORMED choice because they are advertising a superior education that is not better than traditional public schools. They lack oversight and can be owned by ANYONE including foreign enemies of the US while getting our tax \$\$ and our kids and future scientists and engineers info. Their meetings are closed to the public & they don't have to respond to information requests. We can't vote out or demand bad teachers or admin be fired. The courts will NOT get involved in church operations. So parents will have LESS rights & information.

Private schools have NO regulation, not required to do backgrounds, drug screens, no cameras. The church has yet to fully deal with & correct sexual abuses but we should hand them hundreds of thousands of kids?

Charters & vouchers shift dollars more to administration and overhead and less to actual classroom instruction for uncertified teachers, especially for black & brown kids & poor children while the wealthy children receive the best education. They get to choose which kids they accept or not leaving out SPED, foster kids, the most vulnerable. This increases the learning & income gaps robbing our kids of their education, increasing crime and costs for prisons.

When hospitals were sold to be for-profit, they reduced and closed leaving rural communities without adequate access, people died. When a Walmart comes into the community, they drive out all the mom & pops and then they can raise prices or close and create a food desert taking years to figure out what to do. Unregulated banks now threaten our entire economy. Commercializing our residential neighborhoods for STR & hourly renting of pools etc. are destroying our neighborhoods for the profit of everyone but the people that actually live there. I am a business woman, I believe in capitalism but these unbalanced, greedy policies take it too far.

DOOM to you who legislate evil, who make laws that make victims- laws that make misery for the poor, that rob my destitute people of dignity, exploiting the defenseless and hurting, taking advantage of children. What will you have to say on Judgment Day. Isaiah 10:1-4

PLEASE FUND public school CERTIFIED educators. Keep your oath to God & country, VOTE for our kids not campaign donations.

Theresa Elliott
Casa Del Mar
Galveston, TX

This is intended for HB2546 By Mercalf - can you please forward it to that committee. Please support a consistent and predictable school calendar that provides students and their families, teachers, and businesses calendar consistency, including a full summer travel and employment period.

A traditional, uniform school start date is pro-family, pro-kids, pro-business, pro-teacher, and pro-education.

The state would only set a beginning (not to start before) uniform date for schools that are Districts of Innovation after the DOI has chosen to renew its status. All other calendar decisions are made by the local school board, ideally in consultation with parents.

A full summer season allows for families to be highly engaged in reconnecting.

A full summer season allows teachers to relax and connect with their own families as well as train and prepare for the year ahead.

A full summer season allows for the travel industry to continue supporting the Texas economy - generating tax revenues that feed state and local budgets and keep Texas strong!

This is meant for HB 2546 by Metcalf

Jennifer Easley
N/A
San Antonio, TX

This amendment paves the way for school vouchers. School vouchers, including education savings account (ESA) and tax credit scholarship programs, hurt Texas public schools because they direct funding away from an already critically underfunded system. Please increase funding for our public schools in lieu of creating a new system that will divert these funds.

Kelley Thomas
self - consultant
Richardson, TX

This amendment paves the way for vouchers. School vouchers, including education savings accounts (ESA) and tax credit scholarship programs, hurt Texas public schools because they direct funding away from an already critically underfunded system. Please increase funding for our public schools in lieu of creating a new system that will divert these funds.

Bobby Ott
Temple ISD
Austin, TX

My name is Bobby Ott and I am opposed to this bill. I am the Superintendent of Temple ISD, a conservative and a Republican. There are many reasons I oppose this bill and they are as follows:

- Private schools are not accountable to taxpayers; they are not required to report student achievement or financial data to the state or public. This is not Republican and does not represent conservative values.
Tax money going towards an unregulated service without transparency is inconsistent with Republican values.
- Private schools do not have to accept all students; they can discriminate through selective admissions. This is not parent choice after all and many parents will be upset if they are promised "choice", but later denied by their local private schools. Further, if a student happens to get accepted and then turned away due to behavior etc. the student will be sent right back to public schools, but this time minus the funding. This will result in higher taxes locally to make up the difference.
- The superiority of private schools is a myth. Private schools are not required to hire certified teachers. No credible research exists to suggest vouchers improve academic performance. In fact, the latest research suggests otherwise due to misappropriations and closures.
- Vouchers drain resources from public schools; other states have shown that voucher costs often grow well above projections. Texas bill proposals are showing that an ESA around \$8,000, which is almost \$2,000 per student than public schools. This diverts money from public schools.
- Texas already ranks 40th in per-student spending and the rate of inflation since 2019 is 14.5%, per the Comptroller.
- Choice already exists within the public school system: Districts have transfer policies, magnet schools, career/tech academies, etc. Temple ISD accepts transfers without any charge of tuition.
- Vouchers subsidize tuition for existing private school and homeschooled students, putting a huge new financial burden on the state.
- Expressed concerns related to curriculum taught in public schools grows ten-fold in a private school system where the state has no oversight over standards or curriculum.
- When systems are not required to provide special education services, language learner services or additional resources to support low-income learners, eventually this will divide both systems economically and divide our children and our future.
- Lastly, there is no precedent for diverting tax money for the greater good into private services. If I want private security for my child, the legislature does not allow me to divert my tax dollars from the local police department for this expense. If I do not like the tennis courts at the public park and prefer the one at the country club, the same applies. If I make the choice not to use public services, then I should pay for it additionally. That is my choice.

Coryell Duty, Dr.

Self

Lakeway, TX

I agree that this constitutional amendment should be passed and allow Texans to vote the educational vouchers down.

Jarlin Jia

Self

Keller, TX

I oppose against HJR182

Scott Milder

Self

Rockwall, TX

Thoroughly disappointed in Rep Harris, who educators and Texas Parent PAC helped elect. This is just another scheme to score a political victory for those with aspirations for higher office, not in the best interests of students. Also, privatization schemes such as these are about profit potential on the \$70 billion plus Texas spends on public education. Each of you know this. If you disagree and truly believe you are promoting these bills to benefit students, then you don't understand the complexities and you are being played as a pawn by those who do. BTW, 99.4% of Texas campuses earned a C or better, and 74% earned an A or B. By your own standards, where are these so called failing schools that you say drives all this nonsense? How about we invest in the .6% that scored below C, rather than gift tens of billions to alternatives? Nothing conservative about any of these bills. I am a lifelong Republican voter and an authentic conservative. These bills represent very liberal, reckless spending.

Mossman David

Self - Intellectual property law attorney

Austin, TX

I am AGAINST any amendment that can be construed as in favor of vouchers. Vouchers are an attack on public education. I am AGAINST this amendment.

Kristia Leyendecker

Self

Flower Mound, TX

Please stop trying to take money away from public education. Texas already spends less many per student in education than most states in the. Action. Equitable education is only possible if we fully fund public education. Full funding will improve educational access to education.

Barbara Bozon

Self- Executive Director

BELTON, TX

All schools should be subject to state regulations. There should be minimum required skills and topics taught. Private schools should have more leeway to teach things like a certain religious belief, but kids deserve a reasonable basic education. I am opposed to this amendment.

Amber Lemons

Self

Stephenville, TX

Please do not take money away from public education. Every child deserves the best. If a parent chooses another choice, it should be their responsibility to pay for that choice. This will ruin public education.

Lenise Eidson

Self-teacher

Belton, TX

As a Texas citizen and public school teacher, I do NOT agree with this bill. Please vote against it as it will take funds away from public schools.

David Fincher

Cotton Mill Learning Center, National Child Care Coalition

Mesquite, TX

I am FOR HJR 182.

Susan Beaty

Myself

San Angelo, TX

I am against any and all forms of vouchers, tax credits, and savings accounts.

Patti Blue

Gustine ISD

Gustine, TX

My concerns regarding vouchers, ESA's, "school choice", "parental rights", or whatever title you want to place on the "issue" is that any proposed legislation is based on two false assumptions.

Assumption #1: ALL parents have the capability of making a FULLY INFORMED decision regarding the education needs of their child.

Assumption #2: ALL parents will make decisions fully based on the best interest of their child

Any school superintendent, principal, or teacher can provide multiple examples of fallacy behind these assumptions. The really heartbreaking fact behind the issue with "ALL" in both of these assumptions is that our most disadvantaged children are the most at risk. These are the children most at risk of not having parents making decisions when they are not fully informed and/or when they are not fully focused on the best interest of their child.

There are already options available to parents that do not feel their child is receiving a quality education in their current school setting. Parents can:

Transfer their student to a neighboring school or school district

Seek a charter school setting, which is State funded

Seek a private school setting

Seek online home school options (There are tuition free online programs endorsed by TEA.)

Attaching money to the movement of a student out of a public school setting, would create the following:

Incentives for parents to place students in unregulated educational settings

Loss of funds for public schools (This would be especially harmful to districts that serve larger percentages of disadvantaged students. These districts require every penny to fill the holes and gaps for children of poverty or English language learners.)

Larger and larger gaps between what is traditionally called the "have and have nots"

I believe that most parents are truly concerned and seek what is best for their children. However, I believe that the majority of parents do not have the expertise to fully discern what their child's academic needs are. That is the role professional educators fill. That is also why FULLY FUNDED Texas public schools are critical to the future of Texas. But, I think we need to be even more specific - FULLY FUNDED Texas public schools are critical to the future of each and every one of us, our children, our grandchildren... By making a move now, or in the future, to divert State education money to anything but Texas public schools, you will be making a move to subject current and future Texans to lives with limits. What I hope for myself, my personal family, my school family and all Texans is a life without limits.

Peggy Beaty

Self

Abilene, TX

I am opposed to there being any avenue for public money to flow to fund the education of children by any means other than Texas Public Schools. Vouchers, savings accounts, ... or any other name funnels money away from public schools. Texas public schools are not fully funded now and we should not do anything that pulls any funding away from our schools.

Stacy Beaty

Myself

San Angelo, TX

I am against all forms of school vouchers, savings accounts, and tax credits.

Maylon Beaty

Self

Abilene, TX

I do not support implementing this bill. I do not support any bills that would take money away from Texas public schools and place it in the hands of private schools, home schools, or any other no public education entity. I do not support savings accounts, vouchers, or any other name you want to hide this under.

Mary Gaspard

self- public school teacher

Temple, TX

If you are going to send kids and money to private schools then those schools should be subject to the same rules and regulations as public schools. They must take students with disabilities and with emotional and behavioral problems. They cannot deny entry if some one applies and have their boards determine that any child doesn't meet their requirements. Rules are for everyone or no one. This is just a political ploy by Republicans to score points with people who don't want their kids around all types of kids. Everyone is currently created equally under the Constitution at least for now - that may change with whatever some judges decides is best even if is not in the Constitution.

Jacqueline Wright

Academy ISD

Belton, TX

I strongly oppose any voucher, tax credit, scholarship, or other program to fund private or home schools using taxpayer resources that public schools need to serve all students. As an educator in a public school and as a parent with a child in public education, I believe that this bill would have detrimental effects on public education, and would ultimately do much more harm than good.

Randall Burks

Myself

Hamlin, TX

Opposed!

Karen Morgan, Director of Accountability

Temple ISD

Temple, TX

Education savings accounts, or vouchers, are a fallacy as demonstrated by nationwide research. In states with a voucher program, about 85% of students using vouchers were already in a private school, so you cannot argue that vouchers are about private school access. Public schools already offer parental choice with equity and transparency. In Temple ISD, we serve so many in special education (what private schools can serve them well?), and English learners (what services are available to them in private schools?), as well as so many in poverty, for whom a voucher would never be enough to provide them with “freedom.” Charters are already enough, and do not serve all populations.

Please let go of this notion that education savings accounts will "save" our students. All they will do is take necessary tax dollars from a currently financially strapped system and leave students and families behind that do not have a voice or a choice. Say NO to vouchers.

Richard Johnson

Self - Teacher

Cameron, TX

Please hold all educational programs to the same standards. Should Public Education be required to conduct STAAR testing, so should private educational programs. As a state, we are concerned regarding all students.

Randy Burks

Hamlin Collegiate ISD

Hamlin, TX

I am opposed to this measure.

Loyd Morgan, Mr.

Self - Educator

Temple, TX

Vouchers are wrong for Texas. They will only provide school choice for private schools, and private schools do not really want to be put in that position.

Please do the right thing for ALL of the children in Texas and vote NO to school vouchers.

Karen Morgan, Dr.

Temple ISD, Self - Educator

Temple, TX

Education savings accounts, or vouchers, are a fallacy as demonstrated by nationwide research. In states with a voucher program, about 85% of students using vouchers were already in a private school, so you cannot argue that vouchers are about private school access. Public schools already offer parental choice with equity and transparency. In Temple ISD, we serve so many in special education (what private schools can serve them well?), and English learners (what services are available to them in private schools?), as well as so many in poverty, for whom a voucher would never be enough to provide them with “freedom.” Charters are already enough, and do not serve all populations.

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Brad Owen, Dr.
Self
Burkburnett, TX

I am asking you to vote in opposition of HJR 182. Many of the bills advocating for Education Savings Accounts say they are intended for students with educational needs or students with disabilities. Yet, the bills clearly indicate that private schools are not required to provide services for students with disabilities like public schools are. Private schools are also not required to accept all students who apply. Public schools accept ALL students and provide ALL students with the Free Appropriate Public Education they are guaranteed to receive.

I know many of these bills are being pushed under the guise of parent choice and parental freedoms. Our parents in Texas already have school choice. A clear majority of public schools offer open transfer and we have open-enrollment charter schools. In both of these instances, the state's allocation for the student would follow the child to the school they transferred to. And for those parents who desire to send their kids to private schools, there is already that option also. And many private schools have provided scholarships for families who may not be able to afford the tuition. Texas already has school choice. Education Savings Accounts are not needed.

Education Savings Accounts will not benefit rural areas in any way as there are little to no private school options in these areas. In urban areas, private schools have been around for many years and the students who were going to attend them are already there. And that is their parent's choice. Education Savings Accounts would only benefit these families who have already made that choice. Private schools will not alter their admission policies regarding students receiving special education services or for students who are academically behind based on education savings accounts. Legislative actions intended to benefit education in the state of Texas should be aimed at providing support for ALL of the 5.5 million students in the state and not just for the few who have the opportunity to apply and be accepted by private schools.

PLEASE VOTE NO ON EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS!

Jamie Wilson, Dr.
Denton ISD
Denton, TX

AGAINST: There is not any state accountability for performance or fiscal stewardship with these programs. Vouchers reduce equitable access to educational opportunities, weaken rights for students with disabilities, and expose taxpayers to fraud. Voucher programs in other states have a long history of expanding well beyond their intended scope, even surpassing spending limits set by their legislation, resulting in increased state spending on programs that benefit private schools and businesses. Research also shows vouchers do not improve student achievement.

Vouchers also hurt our public schools by forcing rural communities to pay into a system they likely are unable to participate in, not protecting the rights of special education students, and leaving middle- and lower-class families with a large tuition bill for expenses not covered by a voucher.

Ritchie Bowling
Maypearl ISD
Maypearl, TX

While on the face of it this bill seems to be well intentioned, it gives public dollars to institutions that are not held to the same standards as Public Schools or Charter Schools. This would be a mistake without reversing the same restrictions for Public Schools. The State should not be in the business of picking winners and losers. The State should be in the business of setting appropriate accountability (financial and academically) that is fair and straight forward for all school districts, Charters, and Private schools that accept State Tax Dollars. By prohibiting State regulation, that would give these entities whether they be Christian, Muslim, Atheist, or any other religion a blank check without accountability to the tax payers. This would further diminish the parents choice or rights provided to them in Private institutions, and give the Private School vendor at that point all the decision making unless the parents ultimately pull the student out. That is not good stewardship of public dollars and is not based on conservative principles.

Randel Beaver
Beaver Ranch
Archer City, TX

Please do not allow public funds to be spent on private vouchers to private schools.

Angie Rodgers
Public School Educator
Woodway, TX

I would like to express my opposition to HJR 182 in regards to prohibiting state regulation regarding private educational settings. The whole point of a private school is that they are funded privately and are free from the regulations, mandates, oversights of a public school which receives public tax money. If an entity accepts public money, they should be bound by the same "rules" as the public school system.

Barry Nebhut
Self
Austin, TX

I am opposed to any legislation and public funding in any form of voucher or so-called savings programs that are to be utilized to fund private and religious educational institution fees. I fully support our community educational system and only that system should be eligible for taxpayer funding.

Micah Arrott
self
Odessa, TX

Against- I am not in favor of any voucher effecting public education.

Scott Brooks
Self - Engineering Director
Florence, TX

I support all efforts to give parents options for educating their children. The public education system needs competition and reform, and allowing parents access to public funds for alternative schools is a great idea!

Rose Pearson
"self"
Martindale, TX

Research shows vouchers do not always reach the populations of students they claim to reach, nor are they accessible and maintainable for the students whom proponents argue are in most need. (Cost, voucher does not cover full cost, not enough seats at quality private schools, transportation, fees and other eligibility requirements)

Please vote no to any program that is taking money and resources from Public Education

Charter schools do not serve all students they have no accountability.

I have seen over and over families asked to leave and not return from charter schools. They are selective and do not serve all students as public schools are required by law to do.

Michelle Rice, Dr.
Self-Principal
Cypress, TX

I am a taxpayer and am OPPOSED TO VOUCHERS. PLEASE VOTE NO on all bills in Committee today.

Deborah Ball
Self(teacher)
Cypress, TX

I am a taxpayer and am opposed to ALL VOUCHER bills.

Abbie Lester
self-school librarian
Houston, TX

I am opposed to education savings accounts (vouchers) for the following reasons.

1. They drain funds from our public schools to private schools and vendors.
2. There is NO FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY on the use of these funds which can lead to mismanagement of our taxpayer dollars. Public schools have a school board and the TEA they must answer to.
3. There is NO STUDENT PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY. Public school students must take the STAAR test to show academic growth and achievement. Private education providers would not be subject to this requirement.
4. Private education providers DO NOT HAVE TO ACCEPT ALL STUDENTS. The choice in "school choice" is really in the power of private schools - NOT THE PARENTS.
5. Subsidizing current private school students (who do not need the money) would put a huge financial burden on the State - which is currently ranked 49th of the 50 States in funding its public schools.

Valerie Effinger
Self - marketing
Houston, TX

Please, please! I urge you members of our state legislature, to vote "NO" to ALL bills allowing for education savings accounts (A.k.a. Vouchers). This drains funds from public schools, without requiring the same accountability financially or academically. Besides that, private schools are not even required to admit everyone. Would this truly give parents choice? No. Our state is already ranked 49th of 50 in the country in school funding. We should be embarrassed to even be considering these bills. Our public schools need more funding, not dilution of funds to go to other options.

Eileen Nehiley
self; RD & retired TX public school teacher
Houston, TX

As a TX resident, tax payer & parent, I request that you vote no on all Voucher bills. Public education needs our support to educate all students.

Julie Hinaman
Self - taxpayer
Cypress, TX

I OPPOSE any legislation that sends public funds (or redirected tax revenue via tax credits) to private organizations that lack financial accountability and transparency. This bill creates unnecessary and unwanted bureaucracy. NO to vouchers, ESAs, tax credit mechanisms that refund public schools.

Anne Russey
Self
Katy, TX

As a taxpayer (77494) I ask you to, please, strongly oppose and vote no on any and all bills that move to establish vouchers, education savings plans, etc. Taxpayer dollars belong in public schools. I also ask that any charter and private schools receiving state taxpayer dollars be held to the same standards as public schools. Institutions receiving taxpayer funding must be accountable to the state and all taxpayers. Thank you.

Trista Dean

Self

Odessa, TX

I am against any vouchers that defund public education

Frances Romero

Self

Houston, TX

Please OPPOSE HJR 182. Using public taxpayer dollars is prohibited in our State's Constitution for a reason. There is no financial accountability to the taxpayers nor is there any accountability on student academic performance. It is morally wrong to fund for-profit private institutions with taxpayer money without a public board to oversee the management of these funds. Please vote NO on this bill.

Thank you.

Karen Chedotal

Self / Engineering Project Management

Cypress, TX

I am a taxpayer and OPPOSED TO VOUCHERS

Sylvia Campbell

self, retired

The Woodlands, TX

Dear Public Education Committee,

This is obviously designed to counter the passed House budget bill, which essentially prevented public funds from being used for private schools. Public money should never be used to support private schools, which don't have to meet state mandates for hiring certified teachers, financial transparency, or academic achievement. I do not want my tax dollars going to private schools. Instead, we need to beef up our support for our public schools, which are the mainstay of a strong Texas.

Please vote NO on HJR 182.

Thank you,

Sylvia Campbell

Barrett Pollard

Self - Superintendent Gatesville Independent School District

Gatesville, TX

So long as private educational settings are not accepting public funds they should be free from state regulations. However, if private entities are allowed to start receiving public funds, they should be bound to the same oversight and accountability as public schools. This is problematic for the separation of church and state regarding private religious schools. Public schools are not allowed to turn students away. Private school students would then need to take the STAAR test and be subject to the same accountability system. The solution is to not direct public funds to private entities. Public school has been the backbone of this state and country since its inception. Directing public funds to private entities that lack any accountability or oversight is inappropriate. The vast majority of public schools in Texas are excellent. Do not let financial or social mis-steps made by a few isolated schools around the state and country fuel a program that would damage our great public school system.

Cheryl Henry, Dr.

RYHT

Cypress, TX

I am a taxpayer and OPPOSED TO VOUCHERS. PLEASE VOTE NO on all bills in Committee today.

Karen Thomas
Self - Software Consultant
HOUSTON, TX

I am a taxpayer and OPPOSED TO VOUCHERS!

L Quentin Dixon
Self/concerned citizen
Spring, TX

Please vote against HB 182. It has been an important pillar of the Texas constitution to provide a public education for all children in Texas. We need high-quality, well-funded public schools for all students in Texas to ensure the economic strength of Texas in the future. Free public schools are the best way to ensure that every student has access to an excellent education; private schools are not obligated to admit students with disabilities, for example, nor to continue to find ways to provide education to students with disciplinary issues. We need to fulfill the promise in the Texas constitution of a high-quality free public education by adequately funding the public schools -- not trying to end the provision.

s Dotson, Ms.
self
Houston, TX

182 -- Board members Harris and Cody -- I am opposed to all vouchers. I am a taxpayer. Do not pay for them with the power invested in you. Let's continually improve the public schools. No Vouchers. No private schools.NO for a a constitutional amendment regarding public free schools and prohibiting certain state regulation regarding private educational settings.

Deborah Leiber
self
THE WOODLANDS, TX
Good morning

I am a longtime Texas resident and a strong supporter of our public school system. Please do NOT support HJR 182 which is merely an educational savings account funding scheme! A voucher by any other name is still a voucher—it still siphons funds from an underfunded public education system and benefits unaccountable private and charter schools that have selective enrollment and don't have to meet state mandates for hiring certified teachers, financial transparency, or academic achievement.

Thank you,
Deborah Leiber

Debora McWhorter
self
Gatesville, TX

I do not believe that the state should supply funding for families who choose not to participate in the public school system. These "Education Savings Accounts" will only empower those parents who already have enough wealth to put with it to pay private school tuition and have access to private schools. This will have little to no effect in the small towns and rural areas of Texas. I am also concerned about poverty families who will take their children out of public school so that they can collect these funds to support their families, but have no intention or ability to educate them.

I do not understand why the state of Texas is willing to put funds into unregulated parents and companies who are not required to serve all children, only those they want to serve, but is unwilling to support and improve the public schools who serve all children that they are responsible for. However, they are quite willing to continue to mandate programs without funding, raise the expectations above students' developmental abilities, and add more responsibilities to teachers in the public schools. If available funds and common sense went into public school programs and funding, it would be a win for everyone!

Charles Conley
Self, Welding Instructor
Gatesville, TX

Good day,

I'd like to voice my support for a school-choice voucher system that gives parents the option to choose where their children go to school. This kind of program will especially help low-income families who otherwise would not have a choice of where their child is educated. Let's make Texas schools great again.

Theresa S Neman
Self teacher
Spring, TX

Please do not approve any bill that creates vouchers in any iteration. Instead fully fund Texas public schools.

Any school receiving Texas \$\$ must follow the same accountability rules.

Page Foster
self
Moody, TX

I am in opposition of this bill.

Thomas Yarrish
Self, Lead Security Engineer
Cypress, TX

I am a taxpayer in the CyFair ISD area and opposed to any type of school voucher program. I'm asking you to vote NO on any type of school voucher bills in committee on Tuesday.

Keegan Webb
self/principal
Gatesville, TX

I am an Elementary Principal, a republican supporter, and proud advocate of our Texas Public Schools. Education Savings program (aka vouchers) will be determinantal to our Texas Public School system funneling billions of dollars away from public schools. Our public schools exist for the good ALL students, not a select few. We serve ALL students regardless of disability, native language, socio-economic status, etc. If we defund our public schools, Texas (and especially our rural communities) are the ones who will pay the price. Private schools and homeschool students have never had the mandates and regulations placed on them that our public schools have. Private schools are not required to accept students with disabilities, behavior disorders, English language learners, chronic absenteeism, homeless students, migrant students, etc. They are not required to take STAAR and other state mandated assessments that public school students take each year. Our current homeschool students have no oversight with some students receiving no education whatsoever. Until you are prepared to have the same expectations and oversight of private and homeschool, it is simply an unjust system to funnel money away from our public schools to give to these private institutions. If you want to better the education options in Texas, pay our teachers in a manner that is comparable to their education level and the professionals they are. Let's recruit the best for our students and fund our schools properly!

We humbly ask that you please vote no to all voucher proposals and continue to be the supporters of Texas Public Schools. I ask this not for my personal children, but for the good of ALL Texas children. Our public schools are the backbone of our society, please support them as such.

I am happy to speak with you to advocate further for the children of Texas.

Thank you,
Keegan Webb
Principal
Gatesville Elementary

Sherri Duchin

Self

Spring, TX

I strongly oppose this joint resolution. We need to support public education in Texas. Bills such as this one are attempting to strengthen private schools and to ultimately divert public funds to private schools. Education is not a business. It is the bedrock of creating good citizens and of giving every child a chance to realize their capabilities regardless of their economic starting point.

Maria Looez

Self- educator

Spring, TX

I opposed all school vouchers and en outage you to protect public education. We need responsible accountability for all the schools, even private ones.

Carol Heafner

self

Cypress, TX

OPPOSED TO VOUCHERS. PLEASE VOTE NO on all bills in Committee today.

Stephen Stinson

SELF

Manchaca, TX

Oppose.

Thomas Oehler

self

Austin, TX

I am not in support of any contributions of tax credits or any public funds to be utilized for educational assistance programs, vouchers, educational savings accounts or other designated items that would divert funds away from our public school systems. Our public school system is critical to the continued success of the children of the State of Texas and the communities that our public schools serve. Any diversion of funds away from our public schools will negatively impact our school system, and our constitutional right to a quality public education

Ariel Elliott

Myself

Midland, TX

I am writing in opposition of HJR 182. We should be discussing how to support our public schools.

Laureen Chernow

Self, voter, taxpayer, retired Government employee

Austin, TX

Stop trying to co-opt tax dollars for your pet projects, mainly the wealthy. We pay taxes so that ALL children can get an education in a PUBLIC school, not private schools that can choose who they educate and can find ways to exclude some children. Stop trying to use tax dollars for private enterprises that serve only a few and put dollars back into the bank accounts of the rich. If you think some public schools aren't meeting your standards then use our Rainy-Day Fund to pay qualified teachers and give access to technology and special programs for the poorer districts to make public schools better.

Stephen Stinson
SELF
Manchaca, TX

Oppose.

Janet Dunbar, Dr.
Self - School Psychologist
Gatesville, TX

Please vote No to using tax payer dollars to fund student education outside of the public school system. The public schools are underfunded as it is and are not able to provide appropriate staff to student ratios. Pulling funds out of public schools will make this even more difficult. Additionally, in order to provide the current mandated accelerated instruction to students teachers are having to go without lunch and planning periods due to no funds to hire enough teachers. Taking what funds do exist away from public education will make the situation even worse.

Laura Weaver
retired/self
The Woodlands, TX

I strongly oppose any bill that allows the State to issue vouchers for parents of private school students. This includes Education Savings Accounts/Vouchers, bills that propose new funding sources such as an "insurance tax credits" (which give wealthy donors and businesses a way to get tax credits for private school tuition), authorizing a fee, or proposing a constitutional amendment that would be voted on in a future election.

I believe, as do many Texans, that our school tax money should go to help fund public school systems. The push to provide vouchers weakens the public school system and hurts local school districts. With our schools in such dire need of money for facilities, support staff, supplies and more, taking funding away seems like the very opposite of what I would expect intelligent and well-meaning lawmakers to do. The attacks on our public schools is shameful. Please DO NOT SUPPORT HJR 182, HB 4969, HB 4807, HB 4340, HB 3781 or HB 619, which are all measures that will hurt the public schools of Texas.
Thank you,
Laura Weaver

Marlene Lobberecht
self & retired teacher
Houston, TX

Please OPPOSE all voucher bills & Constitutional Amendments (education savings accounts) which include this HJR 182. I am a retired teacher and a taxpayer in Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District. I oppose this bill for the following reasons:
1) They drain funds from our public schools to private schools and vendors.
2) There is NO financial accountability on the use of these funds which equates to mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.
3) NO student performance accountability to show STARR academic performance as private providers are not subject to this testing requirement.
4) Private education providers do NOT accept all students. This school choice is really private school administrator choice of students and NOT parent choice.
Respectfully,
Marlene Lobberecht

Niki Schoessow
SELF
Granbury, TX

I adamantly oppose any form of voucher bills... also known as tax scholarships, education savings accounts, education freedom, parent empowerment, school choice, etc. I enthusiastically support measures to support and improve public education.

Dede Fox

Dede Fox

The Woodlands, TX

Against. A voucher by any other name is still a voucher—it still siphons funds from an underfunded public education system and benefits unaccountable private and charter schools that have selective enrollment and don't have to meet state mandates for hiring certified teachers, financial transparency, or academic achievement.

Kristy McCoy

Self/teacher

Celina, TX

I want to expressly state that as a concerned citizen and taxpayer, I am unequivocally opposed to any form of public funds being used for school vouchers or ESA (educational savings accounts). Public fund should only be used to support and improve our public schools, not diverted to private schools through vouchers.

The writers of the Texas Constitution did not make a mistake when they established funding Texas public schools. Changing the Texas Constitution to allow funds to be diverted to private schools is unconstitutional.

Public schools are the backbone of our education system and provide essential education to all children, regardless of their socioeconomic status or background. Our public schools also have a responsibility to ensure that all students receive a high quality education that prepares them for success in the future.

The use of public funds for school vouchers takes away much-needed resources from public schools which are already facing budget cuts and other challenges. Furthermore, vouchers often go to private schools that are not accountable to the same standards as public schools and do not have to accept all children.

One of my cousins went to a private school in Texas that was not considered accredited, much to the family's dismay, and they did not find out until my cousin was applying for college. They spent \$10,000 a year on an education and she wound up having to take the GED test. Private schools are simply not accountable to the same standards as public schools and may not provide the same level of education to students.

In addition, the amount proposed is far more than any one parent pays in to the system for their child. It is disingenuous to state that the money should follow the child when it takes multiple households to fund one child. Private schools get to pick and choose which students to admit and are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools. The use of school voucher/ESAs would essentially be giving public funds to private institutions who have no obligation to provide equal educational opportunities to all students. This is going to further exacerbate existing inequalities in our education system and not benefit the majority of students or communities as a whole.

I'm highly opposed to giving additional tax rebates to wealthy for private school. This is essentially what you are proposing.

I urge you to reject any proposals that would divert public funds to school vouchers and instead invest properly in our public schools to ensure that every child is access to a quality education. It'd be wonderful if the daily allotment for public school students was increased.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Kristy McCoy

Written on personal time on a personal device

Fran Rhodes
True Texas Project & self
Fort Worth, TX

True Texas Project supports this bill. This is a no brain-er! ("the state may not abridge the right of the parent....") Of course it may not! Parents are in charge of their children, not the State of Texas. I'm just astonished that there seems to be a need to pass such legislation. But maybe there is. Protect parents and children! We favor more freedom and less government.

Mindi Penrod
self
Houston, TX

I am a CFISD taxpayer and parent of a child in public education. I am opposed to all voucher bills, please vote no on these bills. ESA are not appropriate for fixing what you think is wrong with public ed. There's no financial accountability attached to these and they serve only to drain funding from public schools, funneling said money to private school CEOs and vendors of these schools. If you think public education is so broken, work to fix the system rather than divert my taxes into something I would NEVER be able to access! Not to mention private schools do not require the same standards we require for teachers in public ed. We have standards for a REASON, so all students have a baseline EQUITABLE education, and teachers who are knowledgeable in their certifications/subject matter. Private schools also do not have to accept students in special education (or "problem" children). You want public money for rights protected by IDEA AND FAPE? NO. That's not equitable. Invest in our society, don't segregate it!

Private schools want public money, they should be subject to the same standards at public school. You don't get a free pass on my tax dollars!

Jean Grimsley
myself/teacher
GATESVILLE, TX

I am in support of our public schools and against any bill that would funnel public funds away.

Roland Quesada, Superintendent
GWISD
George West, TX

I DO NOT support a constitutional amend regarding public free schools and prohibiting certain state regulation regarding private educational settings.

Diana Witherspoon Rivera
Jacobs
FORT WORTH, TX

I would like to express my support for a STRONG public education system. I am against any legislation that diverts money away from public independent school districts including vouchers and private school education savings accounts. ISDs face an enormous amount of scrutiny, transparency, and accountability where private schools do not. Any funding diverted to private institutions should come with the same level of accountability as public schools. The claim that vouchers will save students who are trapped in failing schools is false, given that 99.4% of Texas campuses earned a C rating or better, and 74% earned an A or B. As a parent, and not an education expert, I prefer that the State strengthens and improves the educational environment for ISD students rather than undermining it with insidious funding manipulation.

Kendy Johnston
Self/educator
Wichita Falls, TX

As a public school educator for 24 years I oppose any proposed bills that divert public funds to private schools/non-public schools via traditional school vouchers, Education Savings Accounts, business tax credits, special population vouchers, virtual vouchers, bracketed vouchers, etc. Instead, our elected leaders need to be held accountable for properly funding public education in an equitable way, so that students from every district in Texas are taught by highly qualified teachers and have the resources they need to learn and grow, no matter their location or their local property tax value. Vouchers/Education Savings Accounts, etc. divert public tax dollars to private schools that are not required to meet the same standards for assessment or FAPE for students with disabilities. Additionally, private schools are permitted to deny entry of a student to their program for any reason. The legislature needs to focus on ensuring that we invest in every child in public schools with our tax dollars. PUBLIC tax dollars should be used to fund PUBLIC schools. With an estimated \$32.7 billion surplus the Texas legislature needs to make Texas public education a top priority. Please vote NO on education savings accounts, vouchers, etc. Additionally, I vehemently oppose any constitutional amendment that diverts public funds to non-public schools.

Ashley Gaulden
Myself
Gatesville, TX

It is careless and unacceptable to take money away from public schools. They already have to do so much with so little. You keep adding things to teachers plates and taking more and more money away at the same time. How can you honestly expect things to ever get better if you don't support our public education system. Vote no to this bill.

Linda Evans, Ms
Self
Conroe, TX
Vote NO HB 182

A voucher by any other name is still a voucher—it still siphons funds from an underfunded public education system and benefits unaccountable private and charter schools that have selective enrollment and don't have to meet state mandates for hiring certified teachers, financial transparency, or academic achievement.

Jane Chesney
self, retired educator
The Woodlands, TX

There is no reason to amend the state constitution. I am against public tax money being distributed to private schools in Texas.

Barbara Brock
Self
The Woodlands, TX

I urge you....do not approve this amendment. It will only hurt public free schools!

Wallace Reeves
Self. I am retired, and a voting, taxpaying veteran
Austin, TX

This is a blatant attempt to use tax dollars to support private businesses and put tax dollars in the pockets of the wealthy. Tax dollars should go to public schools, not private ones. Nor should tax credits go to private schools or persons who send their children to one.

Anne Darr
Self
Fort Worth, TX

PLEASE DO NOT SUPPORT HB 182! The facts speak for themselves. Public schools welcome EVERY child, create communities, provide educational programming and related services for students with disabilities, are held accountable, and are required to comply with state and federal laws. Private/parochial schools pick and choose their students, are ill-equipped to serve students with diverse learning needs and disabilities, are not governed by representatives elected by the public, and are not held accountable for student academic outcomes or responsible spending. Therefore, diverting funding from public schools and giving that money to private/parochial schools is a reckless, irresponsible, inequitable way to spend the taxpayers' money as well as an invitation for corruption, misuse, and fraud. PLEASE DO NOT SUPPORT HB 182!

Scott Caloss
Self
Castroville, TX

While the amount of a voucher in each state varies, it almost always falls short of a private school's cost. Vouchers leave low-income families scrambling to pay the remaining tuition amount and also become a tax subsidy for wealthy families already in private schools.

Pam Sohan
Self/Mom
New Braunfels, TX

I have no problem with parents deciding where they want their child to go to school. However, I believe that if you want your child to attend a private or charter school, you should pick one that you can afford. Tax money meant to support public schools SHOULD NOT be used for students to attend private or parochial schools. It's the governments responsibility to full fund and support public schools. I urge you to vote against this bill.

Jeanne King
self, client support
Katy, TX

I oppose any prohibitions to state regulations regarding private educational settings. Private schools/educational settings should have the same regulations as public schools. The rules of the road don't change when I leave public roads and enter my community. Similarly, educational settings should be regulated similarly.

Lou Montana
Self; Retired
The Woodlands, TX

I am concerned that the interpretation of this amendment could reduce the funding of public education. And private schools should not be excepted from governmental educational standards and oversight; that would be a serious disservice to our state.

JUdy Alter
Judy Alter
Fort Worth, TX

Please vote against this bill until the general population is thoroughly informed about the nature of the amendment and the prohibition regarding private education. As stated, this is vague and tells us nothing.

Jeannie Ryan, Ms
Self/ public school teacher
Lorena, TX

Against. Private schools should meet the same requirements as public schools

Anne Armstrong

Self

Plano, TX

If public funds go to private schools then the schools need to be overseen by state agencies.

Camille Rodriguez, Dr

Self

Fort Worth, TX

I support this.

Amy Garrison, Teacher

Waco isd

Waco, TX

Vouchers will end public schools. The private schools will cherry pick the best students.

Stacey Ward

ATPE

Houston, TX

Vouchers are a ploy that take taxpayer money from public schools and give it to private schools and vendors, and then continue to undermine traditional public schools and charters, teachers, and students. The lack of public accountability in any voucher program is asking for mismanagement of financial resources, lacks academic accountability of the schools that receive the private voucher money, and takes funds away from a system that is broken and needs to be fixed. Any voucher program will have a long term negative impact on our state, teachers and students.

According to Raise Your Hand Texas, the last failed voucher bill in Texas was estimated to divert \$340 million per year from our public schools. That's hundreds of millions of dollars that would've been unavailable to public schools that could be used to support much-needed salary and retirement increases for teachers and staff, support tutoring and accelerated instruction for our at-risk students, including those with learning loss due to COVID.

The amount of public taxpayer money that parents would receive would not be enough to cover the cost of a private school tuition. Parents already have the choice to send their children to any school in the District where they live. When public funds are diverted to private entities, the public school still has to pay the fixed costs to run the schools. There is no discount to the public school. Class sizes will increase, more teachers will be needed, and we already have a hard time filling the classes with certified teachers as it is.

As private schools do not have the same accountability that public schools are held to, if a parent of a Special Education student (which includes dyslexia or any disability under 504), they are not required to provide accommodations to help those students be successful in the classroom as public schools are. How will that help the student who is already struggling? What about a student who has behavioral issues? Private schools are not mandated to accept or keep anyone. So if a student's behavior will not allow the student to stay in the private school setting, the student will either be homeschooled or sent back to public school. Where is the consistency there?

Vote NO on any bill that has any public education money going to a private school institution. It's not good for our state and most importantly, our children.

Jim Armstrong

West Hardin County CISD

Saratoga, TX

I do not support any "voucher" program called by whatever name given. It will take money from traditional public schools in Texas and will especially harm small rural schools.

Diana Fitzpatrick
La Grange ISD
La Grange, TX
No vouchers

Gaea Sawan
self
HOUSTON, TX

No public funds for vouchers. Protect our public schools.

David Dorman
Self
Canton, TX

No vouchers or threaten public school funding

Katherine Johanns
Self, Marketing and Communications Director
Austin, TX

I oppose private school vouchers of any type. The Texas Legislature is bound by the Texas Constitution to maintain and support a system of free public schools. Sending taxpayer dollars out for use by unaccountable private schools that can pick and choose their students will hurt the public schools that are the backbones of our communities. I am proud of my Texas public school education and believe we should focus our resources on the school system that is required to educate any student who crosses its threshold.

Michael Holton, Concerned Citizen
Houston Association of Texas Professional Educators
Iowa Colony, TX

Please consider the ramifications to public school financial resources. Private schools open the door to more corruption from their owners and administrators. Public school educational staff and faculty deserve better funding to provide all students equal opportunities.

Private schools have leniency from elections and provide for the selected students that fit their model.

Faye Mullino Urich
Self/Teacher
Rochester, TX

Private schools in Texas should be held to the same regulations public schools are held to for the benefit of students, teachers, and staff.

Andy Arango
Self/Teacher
Aubrey, TX

I vote NO

Claudia Hurst
Self
Weatherford, TX

The Texas Constitution's intent was to fund an educational system open to ALL Texas children. To put forth this bill is anathema to our Founding Fathers intent. I strongly encourage you to oppose this bill.

Melanie Willett, Public School Educator

Self - Teacher

Mckinney, TX

In the event public funds (tax dollars) are allowed to be spent for student enrollment in a private school, it is imperative that those private schools are held to the same standards and testing regulation as public schools. It is extremely detrimental to our state and our communities to hold educational institutions in this great state to different standards. You would be creating a 'legal' way for our state to allow and encourage segregation. This constitutional amendment should not be passed as it goes against everything our country was founded on. We must have equal education for all. Please vote against this short-sided amendment.

Wayne Warlick

Private Citizen

New Boston, TX

Private schools should in no way be regulated by the state especially if they are Christian Schools.. As should be inferred by the 1st Amendment.

Roland Quesada

GWISD

George West, TX

SB 2368

I DO NOT support SB 2368 This bill goes against the District of Innovation installed by Commissioner Mike Morath to give districts flexibility and innovative approaches to educating our children. This bill is actually out of touch and outdated from the instructional minutes now used by school districts.

Emily Sommerfeld

myself

Gatesville, TX

I am in complete support of our public schools and against any bill that would funnel public funds away

Isabel Wood, Mrs

Self

San Antonio, TX

This is another form of vouchers which the state of Texas does NOT need.

Carolyn Harrod

Self, teacher

Denton, TX

If a private school has zero access to public funds, then the state should not regulate that school. If a private school is receiving public funds, then the state MUST regulate what goes on in that school. This is basic logic. The government cannot give "no strings attached" money to a private school, even through a voucher system. If a voucher system is in place, you, legislators, must ensure that there is accountability to the state, including full participation in STAAR testing and minimum teacher pay requirements.

Sarah Flusche

Self

Baytown, TX

Please do not vote in favor of any voucher related bills. Public education is the backbone of our state, and any bills pertaining to vouchers threaten public education.

Sandy Villarreal
Self retired educator
Runge, TX

State money has no business going to private educational settings. Public schools don't get as much as they need.

Wendy Kirkpatrick
kleinisd
Spring, TX

I am against this bill and I want you to vote against it.

Stephen Pennington, Mr.
Self
dallas, TX

Any school that receives public dollars must follow the same rules a public schools. It is a farce to allow private schools to take my money and then allow them to game the system to not allow students who are poor or have special needs to attend the private school. We already have countless examples of how private schools kick kids to the curb because they wont deal with the same kids public schools must take and serve. There success is carried on the back of the public schools. Any bill like this is not acceptable in the guise of school choice and competition.

Patricia Werner
self-teacher
Spring, TX

I support providing parents a choice in their child's education.

Rachel Gonzales
Self
Leander, TX

Where's the financial support for teachers and students of public education that elected members promised during campaigns??? We were told that Texas always takes care of their teachers and likes to be #1 in everything....yet our education system is falling apart at your hands. We will remember during re election. We will boot out those who lied and did not give appropriate raises. Other states are giving substantial raises, texas will fall even farther behind and it will be extremely embarrassing considering the surplus that was available. Our public Ed students are suffering. Texas will pay the price for the downfall of this foundational component.

Timothy Goodridge
Self, educator
Temple, TX
Please vote no

Sarah Gregory
Pflugerville ISD-teacher
Round Rock, TX

I do not support allowing taxpayer funds to be redirected to private or home schools. Public schools serve ALL students, including students with special educational needs and bilingual students. Also, public schools provide career and technical education needed to train our future workforce. Public school boards are elected positions, and public schools are held accountable by state accountability standards, unlike private and home schools. Currently, Texas public schools are underfunded (ranked 42nd in the nation for per pupil funding) and lack the resources to offer competitive salaries. As a result, Texas faces an unprecedented teacher and staff shortage. Texas students, including my two daughters, deserve better. We need a fully funded public school system to prepare young Texans for the best possible future for our state. I'm addition, we need to invest in student mental health and safety, so our students can be protected from the growing threats of gun violence and fentanyl overdosing. I respectfully ask for your support of Texas public schools and the majority of Texas families who are served by public schools. I ask you to reject all proposals that divert taxpayer funds to other educational institutions. Thank you!

Jesus Perez, Dyslexia Specialist
Public School
Mission, TX

No Vouchers for Private Schools

Leslie Barkis, Dr.
Self, Family Medicine physician
Temple, TX

Please Vote against this measure in all forms! Texas children deserve the education their parents chose for them and State should support that choice. All of us pay our sales tax and property taxes. Why should our children's education funds not go to the school educating our children? The State of Texas benefits from well educated citizens. We need to support superior education from all sources.

R Freeman
Self
Murchison, TX

No vouchers!

Tom Lewis
Myself
Graham, TX

Against

Tim Strueby
Self
Arlington, TX

Please do not pass school vouchers. This only take away money from public schools and does not help improve education for anyone.

Julie Petri
myself
Friendswood, TX

against

Lance Schultz
Self - Educator
Port Lavaca, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the use of vouchers to subsidize private education in Texas. Vouchers are inherently antidemocratic as they take public funds and use them to support private schools that are not accountable to the same standards of transparency and quality as public schools. This undermines the fundamental principles of democracy and equal opportunity that our country is founded upon.

Furthermore, the idea of amending the Texas Constitution to allow for the use of vouchers is deeply troubling. Such an amendment would undermine the state's commitment to providing a high-quality education to all its residents and could set a dangerous precedent for the future. It would also make it easier for private schools to receive public funding without being held to the same standards of transparency and accountability as public schools.

Instead of using vouchers to subsidize private education, we should focus on investing in our public schools to ensure that every child in Texas has access to a high-quality education, regardless of their socioeconomic status or background. This is the best way to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to succeed and thrive.

In conclusion, I urge you to reject any legislation that seeks to use vouchers to subsidize private education and to prioritize investments in our public schools. Let us work together to ensure that our education system is democratic, equitable, and accountable to all Texans.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Lance A Schultz

Ida Serna, Teacher
Self
San Benito, TX

Teachers need a voice. These bills may help some students in some aspect of their education, but teachers help students every day. We need support and respect.

Donald Place, Mr.
Self
Denton, TX

I am a 34-year teacher veteran and fully support funding public schools and once and for all stop any attempt to divert money to private schools. The use of taxpayer money should always be held accountable by the State governor, the legislative body, TEA officials, and local school boards. Some private schools are top-notch preparatory schools, but were the State of Texas allow Educational Savings Accounts, we would see the creation of substandard schools that promise the moon and deliver little in return. More troubling would be if taxpayers funded anti-Semitic, racist and white supremacist parents in their efforts to indoctrinate their children. Accountability please!

Aaron Reynolds
Self. Middle School Teacher
San Antonio, TX

I hope that all are well and able to conduct business free from impediment, restriction, or fear of an artificially inequitable playing field. I wish this same thing for public school teachers whose schools compete with voucher schools that are permitted to regulate who attends their learning institutions, despite using public education dollars to fund their enterprise. Public Schools must accept all, or our nation falls very short of the standard set for public education. Allowing Voucher schools to expell or refuse to allow continued education due to grades artificially inflates their scores and passing rates. If they skimmed off the intellectual cream of the crop and took no public education money, then I would congratulate them on their perpesuity. However, the current system allows students to be expelled just before state testing, thereby pulling needed funds from true public education, and allowing voucher schools to present inflated statistics to pad their testing results, while forcing newly disenfranchised students back into public, non-voucher schools. This is a disservice to the students, and to the education system as a whole. Please consider parity, not just choice. We all receive compensation based on students in the seats, and allowing students to be bandied about dilutes the funding, and does a grave disservice to the students, and their parents. Disenfranchised, hope-damaged students and parents are not a viable basis for a continued strong state or other institution.
Thank you.

Carolyn Evermon
Self
Devine, TX

Vote no

Gavino Zarate
Teacher
Houston, TX

Public schools are the backbone of our nation.
We can have private or charter, but public schools come first!

Callie Nelsen
Self
Cedar park, TX

Constitutional amendments are a joke. I feel this is your way of making school voucher programs go through: getting the public to vote for it with language that will be confusing and disguise what it really is. If you want to help out parents, give them access to what the schools have: the same textbooks, instructional materials, etc. that their public school district offers its teachers. Don't just give them money. Public schools have to meet stringent rules when it comes to performance, testing, text books, and curriculum. No public money should ever be used to find education that does not have to meet these same requirements.

Judy Seffair
Self
Sugar Land, TX

This is very vague. How can people know what the actual intent is? Vote no until you can be transparent

YimDabattuni Rao, Dr.
Self, retired
Temple, TX

Opposed

Ronda Read, Mrs.

Self

Spring, TX

Parents should have school choice. It is only right that parents decide.

Hilary Choate, Mrs.

Self

San Angelo, TX

Public school vouchers, which provide government-funded support for private or religious schools, raise significant legal and ethical concerns. First, vouchers violate the separation of church and state, as many private schools have a religious affiliation or agenda. This means that public funds are being used to support religious organizations, which goes against the principles of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Furthermore, vouchers can contribute to the segregation of schools based on socio-economic status and race, exacerbating existing inequalities and creating an uneven playing field for students. Private schools may not provide the same level of support for students with disabilities or special needs, leading to a lack of equity in education.

Vouchers can also undermine the accountability and quality control mechanisms that are in place for public schools. Private schools are not required to adhere to the same standards of academic performance, teacher qualifications, or curriculum as public schools. This can lead to a lack of oversight and regulation, which could ultimately result in a lower quality education for students.

Finally, vouchers could potentially be used to support schools that promote discriminatory or exclusionary practices. Private schools are not bound by the same anti-discrimination laws as public schools, which means they can choose to admit or exclude students based on their religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other factors. Vouchers could potentially be used to support these discriminatory practices, which would go against the principles of equal opportunity and fairness in education.

In conclusion, public school vouchers are not a legally sound or compelling option for improving education. They violate the separation of church and state, can contribute to segregation and inequality, undermine the accountability and quality control of public education, and could potentially support discriminatory practices. It is important to prioritize the public education system and provide equal opportunities for all students to receive a quality education, regardless of their background or socio-economic status. I posit this for further consideration: vouchers may have monetary support but, not overwhelming voter support. Dial back the extremism.

Cassie Carpenter, Mrs.

ATPE member, self, public school teacher

Lufkin, TX

ATPE member, self, public school teacher

Jennifer Mollenkopf

Self

Allen, TX

I reject any public money to be used for education savings accounts (vouchers).

Krista Benson

Self - educator

Garland, TX

I am the daughter of a retired Texas public school educator, the product of Texas public school education, the mother of a 3rd-grader in Texas public schools, and a 19-year-veteran Texas public school teacher.

This bill is not good for Texas and Texas students. This bill only benefits the wealthy in urban and suburban areas.

Free public education is guaranteed in our Texas Constitution. Public school education is the right of every Texas child. Public school education funds need to remain in public school education.

Dennis Sloan

Self / self employed

Magnolia, TX

Keep public school funding in public schools. I will not vote for any candidate, Republican or Democrat, who votes to divert public school funding.

Denise Parham

Self/Teacher

Tulia, TX

As of teacher of 29 years in public education, I am asking you to VOTE NO for vouchers or saving account plans.

Jennifer Freeman

Self

Graham, TX

Vote No!

Jonathan White

Self

Denton, TX

If private schools continue to educate children in our state, they should be held to certain standards. Already those standards are very lax compared to public schools, and I don't see any reason that the limited regulations that exist should be further loosened.

Jeremi Finn

Self / Teacher

Kaufman, TX

If you wouldn't want public money going to private Satanic Schools, don't allow it to go to private Christian Schools. If you open the door for one, you open it for all. Keep public funds in public schools where there is regulation and accountability.

Kathy Hartzler

Self retired

Georgetown, TX

Taxpayer funds spent ONLY on public schools.

Laura Yowell

N/a

Flower Mound, TX

If a school or organization take public funds, they should have to meet No Child Left Behind requirements. Vouchers can create an environment the discriminates against students with a learning disability or are economically disadvantaged.

Nina Lian

Self

Houston, TX

I strongly oppose this proposed amendment! Public education must be protected for all!

Jack Germaine

Self

Fort Worth, TX

As a taxpayer, I would only support this amendment if NO public funds in the form of vouchers or a so called “parental savings account” is used to to support these private schools. Any school, receiving public funds directly or indirectly in the form of funds used to offset tuition, should be held to the same access and academic standards as our public schools.

Melody Mitchell

Self - public school employee

Henrietta, TX

Vote no please. Keep public money on PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

Deena White, Mrs.

Self - Teacher

Cooper, TX

Please do your research and vote against vouchers. This would ultimately take money away from public education and give to private schools who do not go by the same rules and accountability as public schools do. This isn't fair to the common people who can't afford to send their kids to a private school and work so therefore, they can't homeschool their children either. Vouchers will ruin public education for many reasons. Please don't allow this to happen.

Sonny Cruse
Self, School Superintendent
Graham, TX

The State of Texas has never provided public dollars for private education through legislation or appropriation. However, for the past twenty years, the State has had a variety of policy proposals that would have initiated such programs.

Vouchers are taxpayer-funded subsidies for private schools and vendors with little or no accountability and in my opinion have real potential for creating a segregated society based on economics, disabilities, special needs, etc.

A system that leads to a divided society and increases the gap between have and have-nots is not a system that is beneficial for the State of Texas. Have we not learned what happens in a divided society?

Public schools are accountable to their communities and the state.

Private education entities do not have to adhere to the state accountability system for academics or finances.

Public schools accept ALL students.

Private schools choose their students.

Public schools must adhere to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and have a system of protections for special education students.

Private schools are allowed to have selection criteria.

Public state agencies cannot regulate the private school admission process.

Private schools can include or exclude whomever they choose in student selection.

Private schools are not typically known for taking ALL students whereas public education is held to that standard of enrollment.

I am not aware of private schools that take students with English language learning needs, children with disabilities, or children with lesser financial means as a majority of their selections or in large numbers.

Dawn Bjorge
self/teacher
Austin, TX

Keep public schools strong and vote against this bill. We need to increase money allocations per student to provide a free public education for all students.

Renee Hawk
Self/Educator
Houston, TX

What is the constitutional amendment?
What exactly is the certain state regulation?
Which private educational settings do not qualify? Which do qualify?

Sarah Burns Yeager

Self

Austin, TX

As a public school educator who grew up in Texas public schools I think this program will ruin Texas public schools allowing only the wealthy to attend private schools and the those students with behavioral issues, special education needs, and those who cannot afford private school even with the allotment. Texas teachers are already leaving in droves due to stagnant salaries and poor discipline in their pupils. By thinning the herd of general education students you will force out more teachers because the behaviors and needs will outweigh the man power. I lived in AZ where charter schools have degraded the public school system beyond belief. The lack of funds for public schools in AZ had me using educational resources from the 80's and we were supposed to be shocked that the students weren't improving and growing as learners. This will break the educational system. Focus on something else, like shameful teacher salaries forcing teachers like myself to run themselves ragged working 2+ jobs just to stay afloat.

Jacob DeLarm

Self - Teacher

Katy, TX

Any efforts to allow parents to use public funds to pursue private education will do nothing but drain public schools and further the segregation we already see currently in our schools. It would be far more beneficial for the state government to work with and for the public services currently in place to educate all citizens than allow money to be funneled to for-profit or religious institutions. The right to a free, equal, and high quality education is the cornerstone of democracy and all efforts should be made to recognize and reinforce that cornerstone. Private education, alternative education, are just that, alternatives that have no business being funded by tax dollars.

Jennifer Hill

Teacher

Corsicama, TX

I will leave Texas if vouchers become a thing. I can teach I safer states

Kathleen Anderson, Mrs.

Self/ teacher

Spring, TX

Any private or charter school receiving tax dollars should be accountable to ALL the same standards as a public school.

Blake Moore

Union Grove ISD

White Oak, TX

I agree with Representative Harris and what he is trying to achieve with this bill. Education should not be something that is withheld. Instead, we should try and give the opportunity of learning to many young men and women. Yes there are jobs that might not need a college degree or a doctorates in that field of study but the basic needs of writing, reading, and math will only grow the community and counties. With my mother and father both being in education and being enrolled in a public school, I have seen were families simply can not afford to send their kids to school. This is disappointing because these are the people we will one day have to rely on in a time of need. From what I understand, this bill will help limit some restrictions that hold back kids from education. If this is what this bill is truly about, Representative Harris will have both my support and respect.

Stephanie Hamilton, Dr.

self

Belton, TX

Parents pay taxes that fund public school districts and should be able to pursue alternatives to public schools such as getting vouchers to send their child(ren) to private schools to prevent indoctrination into sociopolitical ideologies that directly contradict family values. The education in private schools is vastly superior to public schools, as private schools focus on true academics instead of attempting to train children to become social justice warriors, or uninformed future voters without the ability to engage in critical thinking to challenge information being presented as fact, when it is ideology. We were financially able to remove our child from the public school system that was failing her by not teaching her foundational mathematics or reading comprehension skills, because teachers spent so much time on discussing gender and sexual fluidity...with 14 year olds. Every parent deserves to be able to send their child to the school that is the best for their child. We pay the taxes to support education, not indoctrination. Please approve bills that support vouchers to give all parents a choice. And, private schools should not be forced to teach anything that goes against their values/beliefs.

Virginia Stout

Parent self

Katy, TX

This bill is bad public policy. Bills like this one drain funds from our public schools to private schools and vendors. There is no financial accountability. There is no student performance accountability. Private schools do not have to accept all students; the choice in school choice is really in the hands of the private schools, NOT the parents. Texas is currently ranked 49th in funding public schools and this bill certainly does not help as it will put a financial burden on the State.

Adam Stout

Self parent

Katy, TX

This bill is bad public policy. Bills like this one drain funds from our public schools to private schools and vendors. There is no financial accountability. There is no student performance accountability. Private schools do not have to accept all students; the choice in school choice is really in the hands of the private schools, NOT the parents. Texas is currently ranked 49th in funding public schools and this bill certainly does not help as it will put a financial burden on the State.

Nicole Fuller

Self- teacher and parent

Tuscola, TX

Any public money should stay in public education!! Please do not take money away from our schools, which are already struggling. The teacher shortages and 4545 requirements have already left many districts unable to fill spots. Taking more money out is not the answer!!! No to vouchers! No to tax credits! No to ESAs! No to parent choice! No! No! No! Please do what is right for our public school children! Say NO to any public money leaving the public education system. Thank you.

Parent led education is home school! We, as teachers already have TEKS and TEKS Resources, which parents can view. As a parent, I trust the teachers in my district.

Michelle Rinehart, Dr.

Self, Superintendent

Alpine, TX

The Texas legislature is spending excessive time fighting over something that isn't good for Texas and doesn't align with Texan values: vouchers.

While vouchers have been rebranded as "educational savings accounts" and "school choice" this session, rural Texans aren't fooled: this is a deliberate effort to further defund public education in Texas, at a time when Texas already ranks in the bottom 10% in the nation in per pupil funding.

Vouchers aren't good for Texas and go against our Texan values. Here's why.

First, Texas public schools need every dollar of public education funding. Alpine ISD is a textbook example, being one of the most underfunded school districts in the state. This underfunding limits the opportunities we can provide our students and the salaries we can pay our staff.

While the average teacher salary in Texas is \$60,000, this salary isn't even on our district pay scale. State averages often mask outlier actualities; Alpine ISD's underfunding is a case study in a rural, remote district that suffers from Texas' disinvestment in public education.

Not only do districts need every dollar of public education funding, the state of Texas has a constitutional requirement to provide it (see Article 7 of the Texas Constitution).

Siphoning money from public schools to fund private schools is malpractice, especially at a time when many of our public schools are so dramatically underfunded.

Second, vouchers allow public funds to be spent without any accountability or transparency. This is as anti-Texan as a proposal could be.

Texas public schools are held to rigorous standards in accountability, finance, academic achievements, discipline, safety/security, and more. And rightfully so. As stewards of public funds, public schools should be (and are) accountable for their effective use of those funds on the public's behalf.

Why are transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship essential for public schools, but not required for private entities that would receive vouchers? This is a core conflict with Texas values.

Either we believe in transparency and accountability when dealing with public funds, or we don't.

Lastly, and concerningly, while public schools must educate every child, private schools may discriminate, choosing who is and isn't allowed in their institutions.

Students with a history of academic struggles, special needs, or behavioral needs are disproportionately underrepresented in private schools. Private schools typically are not representative of the community they exist in, in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomics, and students with special needs.

Unfortunately, this session's relentless emphasis on vouchers is keeping the legislature from tackling real public education issues, including addressing the persistent underfunding of public schools. It is time to move on from the vouchers debate and get to the real work of state legislative leadership, including fully funding our public schools.

Catherine Solis

Self

San Antonio, TX

This bill does have the best interests of all Texan in mind. If private schools can take public tax payer money then they should be held to the same standard as public schools.

Robert Seward, Hon.

Mesquite ISD

Mesquite, TX

I'm a school board trustee and I am asking you to oppose vouchers, education savings accounts, tax credits, and any other scheme that diverts taxpayer dollars from public schools.

Furthermore, private schools are not required to accept voucher students and they are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools.

I believe that these voucher programs are bad for Texas. I do not agree with taxpayer dollars going to private institutions that don't have to play by the same rules as public schools and are not accountable to taxpayers.

Please say NO to prohibiting certain state regulation regarding private educational settings.

Muza Millan

Galena Park ISD

Houston, TX

Public education needs to continue being public regardless parents want to send kids to a private school. No funds for charter schools with low achievement rates. Public schools have proven be the most effective way to educate our children.

JERI ROSS

Self - Public School Teacher

WIMBERLEY, TX

Of course the state should be able to regulate whatever education method it funds. However HJR 182 is just another scheme for redirecting public funds to private education providers, including religious education providers and private corporations, or anyone and everyone who wishes to call themselves an educator, without holding them to the same professional standards required of public educators. Education by high quality, certified, professional educators is all the state should be paying for. We should not be taking state funds for education and squandering them on schemes designed to destroy teaching as a profession. Running dual systems of education is incredibly inefficient and is a waste of taxpayer dollars. Please fund public education fully and not fund unconstitutional religious and private education schemes, including home schools that with this amendment, would not be able to hold private educators accountable even though they might be receiving public funds. Don't waste our tax funds and encourage corruption in education by funding fly-by-night players pretending to be educators. Our children deserve true, high-quality, professional and public education, free to everyone. Don't line the pockets of charlatans in the name of competition and then give them a free pass on education quality. This will undermine tried and true, professional education.

Melanie Tanner

Self, retired professional school counselor grades 6,7,8

Hurst, TX

As a retired middle school counselor, I urge my representative to vote no to this bill. My service was happily dedicated to a large public school district located in an urban setting. In this environment, I found positive, professional educators dedicated to providing safe environments for students to thrive academically as well as emotionally. With that in mind, my tax dollars need to support public education not private, charter schools or whatever the name is coined at this date. Having no children and having paid taxes to provide free public education as my gift to the children of the future, this citizen does not wish my money to be spent elsewhere. If a parent chooses to not take advantage of the public school dedication and focus towards providing their child's academic and future success in college and career readiness they do have a choice, to pay for it themselves. This retired educator envisions my state spending money in the public school sector promoting these goals and ideals. Education has been going through a difficult time due to the restrictions of Covid however this is not an excuse to take an opening to assume public education has not been meeting the students' needs. Having seen students thrive in public education as a counselor, I have also experienced the influx of students at the end of the first six weeks and semester unable to continue their education from charter schools due to low performing grades or discipline behaviors something that public education would address with parents and child to encourage success. My tax dollars do not need to support a system with no regulations and standards for the children of Texas to be prepared for the future. Public education supports and motivates all students. Thank you for your time and support in voting no.

D.S. Zamora, Mrs.

Self - Retired

Houston, TX

I hereby register my ****opposition**** to HJR 182.

This opposition is based on life experience with students and graduates of private Texas schools in addition to the growing reports of poor adult behavior and supervision in a significant number of private Texas schools.

This amendment would damage efforts to reduce and eliminate abuse and assault of minors since some private school operators have demonstrated ignorance of Texas statutes.

Anna Roome, Teacher

Public educators

Dallas, TX

No this is a way for rich people to get money back on their property taxes that are supposed to go to fulfill students rights to a free public education. It is the rich and religious robbing our public education. What amazes me is the Gov. Seems to have plenty of money to give those who chose private schools but cannot give public education teachers decent wages. I am a 20 yr teacher and new teachers are making almost the same income. So done with TEI. All these education bills this year are about making public education fail with lack of funds, unnecessary programs that greedy corporate America companies are pushing on education and they want a tax credit to boot, more ways for tetired teachers to double dip which eventually ruin our requirement fund. TEA taking over districts after 3 years of overcoming Covid? Teachers are Fed Up with testing testing testing. Students are too. My three kids got an excellent public education, but as a 20 year teacher it is going down hill. As a legislative representative you are not doing what is best for the students in public education.

Where is my tax credit? Why do I even have to pay a school tax? Why can I not collect social security and retirement like other people?

Do we need more teachers in special ed?

Dallas ISD has TEI system which is rigged to help special people who are related or favorites and they are robbing teachers. They discriminate against older teachers. Why is no one focuses on the real issues.

Overall, if these parents get a tax credit they are getting their taxes back and public education suffers. You have no right to make me pay taxes anymore if you take public funds and put them in the hands of religious and private schools. All you have done is prove you have funds to pay teachers much better. Many have 2nd and 3rd jobs because we cannot pay our rent and food. It is ridiculous how horrible we are treated.

Erin Bingham

Self

Spring, TX

Leave public money in public schools! You are trying to defund a system that educates MILLIONS of children!

Maritza Wong, Mrs.

Self - Stay at home mom

Manvel, TX

I oppose this resolution because it is unnecessary and a poor way for this legislature to spend its time and energy. Thank you.

Jennifer Barbaste

Self teacher

Carrollton, TX

The state has an obligation to support a system of free public schools. As a state ranked with one of the worst public funded school systems why would you take more away rather than putting more money to solve the problem at hand.

Most parents still can't afford private school tuition even with the voucher. The voucher will only benefit the wealthy.

Vouchers are a terrible idea. Please support public schools.

Kim Olbrish

Self

Killeen, TX

My tax money doesn't need to go to a private school. If parents want their children to go to a private school they need to pay for it.

Janae Strickland

Self Teacher

Spring, TX

I do not my tax dollars taken away from public education and used to fund private schools

Stacey McNeely

Self/School Counselor

Dallas, TX

As a lifelong Texas resident, tax payer, and public school counselor for the past 26 years, I vehemently oppose using any tax dollars to fund ANY private schools. Do your job! Properly fund our Texas public schools and build the workforce Texas will need to stay competitive in the future. Any curious Texas citizen can easily see that \$8000 DOES NOT pay for private schools. All you are doing is subsidizing the wealthy who can already choose to send their children to private schools. Any representative voting for tax dollars to support private schools is truly a wolf in sheep's clothing. I vote and have a loud voice to speak on this issue to my friends, family, neighbors, etc. I grew up in rural West Texas where there are few if any private schools to choose. This amendment is offensive and deceptive to your conservative base. DO YOUR JOB! Properly fund public schools and let the wealthy use their own money if they want to choose to go private!!

Opal Mobbs, Mrs.

ATPE

Tye, TX

Vouchers are not the answer. Discipline or the lack thereof is the main problem in public schools and why parents might seek moving their child to private schools. There is no accountability on parents for the misbehavior of their child. Yes the student is responsible for his/her behavior but often parents feel their child is not in the wrong. I could go on.

Necia Marin, Assistant Principal
SELF/Educator
GRAHAM, TX
Against

Necia Marin, Assistant Principal
SELF/Educator
GRAHAM, TX

AGAINST
HB 619
HB 3781
HB 4340
HB 4807
HB 4807
HB 4969
HJR 182

Jana Cash
Vidor ISD
Beaumont, TX

Mrs. Carver... Mrs. Crews... Mrs. Papania... Mrs. Moore... Mr. Brown... Coach Graves... Mrs. Watson... Coach Landry... Mrs. Tarter... my father, Roger Russell. These are public school teachers names that helped lay the foundation that has lasted now for 43 years in my own career now. I challenge you to think about those who taught you along the way to get you where you are today and just let them know why you voted NO to these vouchers. Thank you.

Gloria Retana
Self
Temple, TX
Against HJR 182

Todd Copeland
Self
Eddy, TX
Against

Cody Carroll, Superintendent

Holliday ISD

Wichita Falls, TX

Please vote NO on HJR 182 for the following reasons:

Private schools are not accountable to taxpayers; they are not required to report student achievement data to the state.

Private schools do not have to accept all students; they can discriminate.

The superiority of private schools is a myth. Private schools are not required to hire certified teachers. No credible research exists to suggest vouchers improve academic performance.

Vouchers drain resources from public schools; other states have shown that voucher costs often grow well above projections.

Texas already ranks 40th in per-student spending and the rate of inflation since 2019 is 14.5%, per the Comptroller.

Choice already exists within the public school system: Districts have transfer policies, magnet schools, career/tech academies, etc.

Vouchers subsidize tuition for existing private school and homeschooled students, putting a huge new financial burden on the state.

Public tax dollars should go to schools that are accountable to taxpayers.

Vouchers take much-needed money from local neighborhood schools and tend to help only students whose parents can already afford private schools.

Vouchers give private schools, not parents, the right to choose.

Monique Mason-Kelly, ESL Secondary Teacher

Self

Houston, TX

It is imperative to keep state regulations in place regarding public schools. Rural and urban school districts would be gravely impacted by including private educational settings in this bill. State regulations in place keep loopholes from being created to prevent this from happening. Vote no on this bill.

Sonia Martin

myself

Midland, TX

Vouchers undermine strong public education and student opportunity. They take scarce funding from public schools—which serve 90 percent of students. Also, can hurt students with disabilities by weakening rights given to them under federal regulations.

Jane Maxvill, Ms

Self retired special education teacher

Dallas, TX

I am concerned that a significant number of our children, those needing special education services, are being ignored in the talks regarding private v public funding. These children and their educators need more financial security. Voucher amounts will not cover this

Kelly Moore
Self/ Teacher
Tomball, TX

I oppose use of public funds for private institutions who are not held to the same standards and assessment requirements as public schools.

Jennifer Espey
Spring Branch ISD School Finance Advocacy Team
Houston, TX

I OPPOSE HJR 182 -- changing the Texas constitution in order to "open the door" for vouchers/ESAs and thwart any future legal challenges is unconscionable when our Texas public schools rank near rock bottom nationally on per student funding. I'm also incredibly surprised Rep. Harris is the author of this bill -- as I had a meeting with his legislative director just last week who told me Rep. Harris represents over 30 school districts and there is only one private school in his district. It just doesn't make sense. Let's lift up our public schools -- our public school kids -- for the future good of Texas. I OPPOSE VOUCHERS/ESAs in any form because Texas public schools are already woefully underfunded, Texas residents are woefully overtaxed (SBISD has the 10th highest recapture payment in the state this year), taxpayer dollars meant for public schools are diverted to the general fund for unknown uses -- that are not education, complete lack of accountability associated with voucher programs, vouchers divert money away from public schools, private schools are under ZERO obligation to admit a child, voucher programs may start "small" but, of course, will balloon in cost -- and where will the state go for money to fund it -- taxpayer dollars meant for public schools, I could go on and on. NO VOUCHERS! SBISD is a great school district that is going to be put in a terrible financial position if the basic allotment is not raised at least \$900. This is UNACCEPTABLE. AGAIN, I OPPOSE VOUCHERS/ESAs. I OPPOSE HJR 182 -- because Texas public schools deserve to be protected -- not undermined.

Michelle Oliver Oliver
Teacher
Wichita Falls, TX

No, private schools should be held to the same standard as public schools. If the regulations are good enough for public schools, they should be good enough for private schools as well.

Shane Webb
Gatesville ISD
GATESVILLE, TX

I am an Assistant Superintendent, a republican supporter, and proud advocate of our Texas Public Schools. Education Savings program (aka vouchers) will be determinantal to our Texas Public School system funneling billions of dollars away from public schools. Our public schools exist for the good ALL students, not a select few. We serve ALL students regardless of disability, native language, socio-economic status, etc. If we defund our public schools, Texas (and especially our rural communities) are the ones who will pay the price. Private schools and homeschool students have never had the mandates and regulations placed on them that our public schools have. Private schools are not required to accept students with disabilities, behavior disorders, English language learners, chronic absenteeism, homeless students, migrant students, etc. They are not required to take STAAR and other state mandated assessments that public school students take each year. Our current homeschool students have no oversight with some students receiving no education whatsoever. Until you are prepared to have the same expectations and oversight of private and homeschool, it is simply an unjust system to funnel money away from our public schools to give to these private institutions. If you want to better the education options in Texas, pay our teachers in a manner that is comparable to their education level and the professionals they are. Let's recruit the best for our students and fund our schools properly! We humbly ask that you please vote no to all voucher proposals and continue to be the supporters of Texas Public Schools. I ask this not for my personal children, but for the good of ALL Texas children. Our public schools are the backbone of our society, please support them as such.

Joe Gordy
Myself
Graham, TX

Texas should not fund tax credits, Educational savings credits, or vouchers for private institutions unless they are held to the same accountability and entrance standards as Texas Public Schools.

Melissa O'Malley
self
Wichita Falls, TX
no

Gary Browning
-- Select a Prefix Name --
Graham, TX

Vouchers are not in the best interest of school age children in the state of Texas. Public Independent School Districts have the best teachers, a greater capacity to offer career preparation courses, and extra-curricular programs that cannot be matched by private/charter schools. Until there are accountability requirements for private schools that can show they produce superior academic outcomes for students, voucher bills should not be considered. Also, private/charter schools are not under the same requirements for accepting ALL students, creating inequities in student populations. Public schools are not failing students. Society is failing itself by not taking advantage of the free education they have access to. Create a bill that makes parents accountable for supporting schools in the education of their student. Thank you for considering these comments.

Marc Floyd
Self
Belton, TX
Against.

Sharon M Wilson
self retired
Temple, TX
Against

Bryan Shipman
Blackwell CISD
Blackwell, TX

We are for bills that allow "educational environments outside of public schools" to operating without regulation from the state when the state does not provide support or maintenance.

Monique Madon-Kelly, ESL
Self
Houston, TX

Vote no to this bill that includes a constitutional amendment regarding public free schools and prohibiting state regulations in place to stop inequalities and inequities from occurring in our educational system. This is a reverse back to segregation days where exclusion of students certain students was legal. Vote no to this bill impacting quality education for rural and urban communities.

Jennifer Cain
Self
Cedar park, TX

As a central Texas educator, I am strongly opposed to repurposing public school funding to support any kind of voucher and private school programs. A strong public education is a critical component to ensuring all students have access to a high quality education.

As an educator, I am against any bill that adds additional constraints regarding instructional materials including school libraries and classroom libraries. Local districts can establish and follow local board policy regarding instructional materials. I do not believe lawmakers without educational expertise should be overstepping. As an educator, I encourage you to step foot in a school or go to a school event and look around at all of the students you serve and represent. I believe all students should have access to instructional materials where they can see themselves represented. All students should have fingertip access to books of choice. Educators need to focus on planning for instruction to meet the needs of each student. Teachers should not be spending valuable time completing tasks that have been suggested in many bills claiming transparency. A parent is always welcome to partner with a campus to view instructional materials.

Please say no to any kind of voucher system that takes money from public education. Please vote no to any instructional materials constraints or removal of access. Please vote for all students.

Kay Smart
myself
Gatesville, TX

I live in a rural community with public school(s) being the only school option for children/teenagers education. Our community is a blue collar workforce; households require multiple incomes in order to survive. A voucher system would be detrimental to our schools surviving. Please vote against the voucher system so our children that attend public schools do not suffer due to lack of funds.

Jeannette Whitt, Educator in Math and Science
Leander ATPE President
Liberty Hill, TX

All schools within the State of Texas should be held to the same requirements. Including, Graduation Credits, Certified Teachers, same Testing Standards, UIL requirements and acceptance of All Students. When students move from a Private Entity to Public Education there is often a huge gap in education requirements, thus a student returning to Public school their Junior year now has to fulfill the State requirements and may not be able to graduate with their class year. I have seen this happen so many times coming from home schooling and private entities where the teachers have to work double time to get these students caught up to their peers. It is overwhelming to the student and burning out the educators.

Sherrie Barnett, Music Teacher
Education- EISD
Wichita Falls, TX

It's not clear what this is accomplishing????

Toby Thomason
self
Denton, TX

I am opposed to any bill that would reduce funding to public schools, especially if those funds would be diverted to private schools, charters, etc. Texas should increase funding to public schools. Public schools are the best option for educating the children of Texas.

Tara Cummings, Dr.
self, psychologist
cypress, TX

I am a proud parent of public school students and product of public education myself, and I am a taxpayer within Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. I am OPPOSED to ALL voucher bills (by whatever wolf-in-sheep's-clothing term they may be called), and I urge the Committee to vote NO on ALL voucher bills today, including this one. Public funds for education belong in public schools and nowhere else.

Traci Dennis-Witter
self
Temple, TX

I do not support this bill. This will allow schools to bypass legislation that ensures equity. This bill will further create an inequity and educational divide based on income and contribution abilities. The poverty gap will increase and more Texans will be in an impoverished cycle that will increase and repeat for generations to come.

Arturo Trevino Jr.
Self, Elementary Music Teacher at Brownsville ISD
BROWNSVILLE, TX

If private schools utilize public funding then it should fall under public verification that fiscal usage is conducted effectively and not contradictory to public school standards. Second is transitional funding that is not equitable since most private programs under PIEMS snapshot release underperforming students or those that don't meet private school standards, surrendering students back to public schools when such private schools should in fact keep them until the end of the year. IDEA is one example of this consequence simply releasing students back to public schools when student discipline is not to par for local agency use. We need to be realistic in meeting consistent and routine through this post-pandemic moment.

Delaina Bishop
Self/ Parent of young school age children in public schools
Austin, TX

I highly OPPOSE this bill.
If you think private schools should not be tracked or held accountable then why on earth would the State of Texas' citizens have to pay for both, public and private schools. This bill just punches public schools in the face saying we get to boss you around and you have to follow our rules, but private schools don't have to be held to states standards? If ESA's were to somehow get bullied into passing, then ANY school educating children and receiving any monies need to be regulated!
Public funds are for Public schools. Period. Fully fund our Teachers and staff, stop mandating and piling on more and more onto our Educators and the public schools would flourish. For decades Republicans have had control of our State. Maybe place blame of any school faults to the people in actual control and stop trying to wage war against our Educators. Giving public Money to any school not held accountable like public schools are is just theft of public tax dollars and does not help our children. Texas has school choice already, charter schools are a free alternative to public schools. If parents want any other type of education for their child, they are more than welcome to seek that education out and pay for it themselves.
I appreciate those of you on both party sides that see how damaging this could be to our children. Thank you.

Chris Ross
Self
Allen, TX

Choice is no choice when private schools won't take anyone they deem "difficult/expensive" to educate. They won't take special needs, learning disabilities, discipline or attendance issues, etc. You will pull resources away from the very kids who need it most!

Robert Magonigal

Self

Belton, TX

I do not support using Tax money to be directed to private schools. If parents can afford to send their students to private that is fine. Taking money from public schools just insures that schools will continue to do more with less support. I am 75 and still pay school tax and do it with the knowledge, it is needed, so our future children may be educated. Like all entitled programs profiteers will open a so called private school in a unused building. They will not be regulated to meet the standards. What we need is legislators to do the right thing and fund our school so they and the teachers can do their jobs more. This seems to be another case of the legislators trying to wash their hands of a problem and make their jobs easy by simple not having to do what it take to educate in public schools, and this is reflected by the fact we are in the lowest 10 percent nationwide when it comes to supporting education in general. Legislators do your job and support the students and educators that work very hard to make a better world for all and not just through money to the private sector.

Laura Amilpa

Myself

Dickinson, TX

Against

Amy English

Hutto ISD

Hutto, TX

Public Money belongs in Public Schools

Kylee Windham

self; teacher

Dickinson, TX

I oppose the allocation of funds towards "educational alternatives to public schools." We must defend public schools and the rights of children in all walks of life to attend a properly funded school they are zoned to. Voucher programs will inherently affect students who are already disenfranchised. These students will ultimately suffer the most if a voucher program is approved. We must protect our low income students and the schools that often times are the greatest influence in a student's life. Decisions on education must be based in a pure motive to better education for all students. Vouchers, quite simply, are not the best decision for students. Please do what is best for all students, especially our low-income, disenfranchised students, and keep public school funding within public schools. Private schools are just that- private. They must make their own financial decisions. Do what is right and protect our public schools.

Darrin Ard

self / high school teacher

Wichita Falls, TX

Vote no.

Elizabeth Perez, Retired teacher of 32 years

Self

EL PASO, TX

Concerning HB 182,4969,4807,4340,3781, I Elizabeth Perez,, retired teacher of 32 years, witness to the propagation, indoctrination, grooming, and teachings of LGBTQ+, request parents be given the option to choose whatever school they desire for the education of their children. Without consent of parents, Texas schools are sexualizing students and provoking havoc in family units. As tax payers, we request our monies be used to edify and not corrupt society and future generations.

Virginia Gaskey
self
Henrietta, TX
NO

Cheryl Stewart
Self
Hutto, TX

Public tax dollars belong in public schools!

Daniel BARTON, Superintendent
Goodrich ISD
CLEVELAND, TX

Please do not support an educational voucher/savings account. Educational vouchers/savings accounts take funding away from public schools that desperately need to support teacher salaries, etc. Support of vouchers would allow private schools to receive this funding without accountability for student success. Additionally, this would encourage segregation based on financial ability or special population. Private and charter schools are allowed to deny enrollment for reasons such as special population and discipline concerns. Lastly, the sovereignty of any nation is based upon its ability to produce an educated workforce. Please do not consider releasing public school funding to unregulated educational systems. Thank you for your service to our state.

Sharon A Spears
Lumberton ISD
Lumberton, TX

I support this bill.

Robert Leonard
Self (22 year science teacher in San Antonio)
Helotes, TX

I am a member of ATPE. I use their service strictly as a means of professional insurance and legal representation. I am aware of their efforts to end vouchers systems in Texas, and I strongly disagree with their political activities related to this matter. I believe in parents right to choose the educational system that is best suited to their child's needs. As a tax payer, and I pay A LOT of taxes, I believe I should be provided with funds to send my child to the educational facility that I feel best meets my child's needs.

I will be searching for other means to insure myself in my profession. Do not mistake my contributions to ATPE, as an endorsement of their Liberal agenda.

Virginia Gustin
self
Round Rock, TX

Public money belongs in public schools

Dolores Covington
Texas voter
Georgetown, TX

Public money belongs in public schools.

Tobi McCain
myself
Graham, TX

Please do not pass anything with vouchers. Rural and smaller districts will not benefit from them at all. Students in these schools need the funding to go to public education, not private.

Brandi Jackson
Temple ISD
Salado, TX

Please vote AGAINST all legislation that will take funds from public schools. We already run a major corporation (school district) on a very limited budget. Removing funds for private institutions would cut those even further. Please help me understand how the state provides \$6,160 per student in funds, but we would be expected to give up \$8,000 for you to take your student to a private school. That would be like me going to a Ford dealership to purchase a car, not finding what I wanted, and expecting them to just give me additional cash, so that I could go to the BMW dealership. Also, what happens when a student leaves to go to private school, and due to behavior/needs/grades returns to public school? We have already lost those funds and are now expected to give that child the FAPE he/she deserves while receiving zero funds. Often upon return from private schools, students are often behind what is expected of public school and it costs money in interventions to fill in gaps. This takes a way from all of our students.

I feel this will tip our student numbers, so that we will have more students in special programs than not. I foresee low SES students remaining in public education, as they cannot pay the difference in tuition costs; special education students will remain due to private schools not being mandated to have services. Students with difficult behavior and EL students would be in the same position. Staff retention is already difficult. Not having balanced classrooms will just be another reason for quality staff to leave the field.

Public school money would go to organizations that are not held to the same monitoring and grading that public schools are held to.

More and more responsibility is being placed on public schools with less and less support from the state and federal government. I have 23 years in the school system and do not know if I can withstand my 5 remaining years for many reasons, but this legislation is part of it. STAND FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION.

AARON MORRIS
self
SHALLOWATER, TX

I am against vouchers and sending out tax dollars to outside sources with no accountability. I am an elected school board member in a very successful district.

Eric Dumatrait

Self

La Porte, TX

I oppose school vouchers for the following reasons:

Private school vouchers will DRAIN money from public schools despite the fact they do not cover the full cost of attending private schools.

Private School Vouchers will strengthen big government bureaucracy by creating education assistance organizations (EAOs) to manage the voucher transactions at a cost.

There is no regulation or follow up on where the voucher money goes, and third-party vendors will take advantage of this.

Parents in Arizona have reported using hard-earned taxpayer dollars to subsidize purchases like kayaks, trampolines, cowboy roping lessons and trips to water parks.

In Milwaukee, 41% of private voucher schools operating between 1991 and 2015 FAILED.

Vouchers are anti-parent and anti-student. Private schools are not required to serve students with disabilities, and they are certainly not required to provide parents crucial information regarding curriculum, health services or disciplinary practices.

Special Education students will have no guarantee they would receive services like an individual education plan, access to certified teachers and inclusion in the regular classroom. Private schools can also deny or unenroll students for ANY reason, including children with disabilities.

Fifty percent of Texas school districts are small or rural, meaning the harmful effect of vouchers can spread like wildfire across the state by forcing them to pay into a voucher program made primarily for urban students.

Vouchers will abandon vulnerable students in increasingly underserved public schools. The truth of the matter is that there is nothing a private school can do to improve student outcomes that public schools couldn't do if they were adequately and fully funded.

Callie Dawson

Librarians

Bastrop, TX

am apposed to any voucher programs being established until our public education system is fixed and not treated like a political punching bag. At this point vouchers will only benefit the wealthy and those who want to profit on our children.

Donna Haschke, Mrs.

Self / retired

Buda, TX

Public schools must remain public with the necessary tax dollars to fund them. Vouchers/ ESAs would siphon much needed monies away from already underfunded public schools.

Kenyon Andrews, Educator

TSTA

Lubbock, TX

Public education is a cornerstone of our democracy, and we must do everything we can to ensure that our schools are strong and thriving. Please vote to support public education and help create a brighter future for all Texans.

Justin Crittenden, Mr.

Self and I am a High School Principal

Kerrville, TX

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments on the possibility of vouchers being issued for education in the state of Texas. Texas has a long history of great public schools; I have worked in many of them in my twenty-five plus years in public school service. The reason we have strong public schools and need to protect them is to create a educated citizenry. Our founding fathers understood the importance of education and preserving a strong republic. When we waver from funding public schools, we endanger the very system that has made us a great state and nation. If we want to create a great nation and a strong economy, we need to fund and protect public schools.

I am concerned with public funds being used to pay for education that will not be monitored or regulated. What will the private schools be teaching? Who will be teaching the students? Who is overseeing the schools? Are they teaching radical beliefs? Are they teaching anti-American ideas?

I fully support parents' rights to educate their children how they seem fit. Texas does a very good job of staying out of the parents' business, and we should continue to do this. I cannot support public funds being funneled into unregulated schools. Private schools are not under the authority of TEA/Texas Legislature, and they should not be. Private schools should have the right to teach what they deem appropriate, but public funds should not be paying for an education that might be seen as radical. These could be political radicalness, or religious radicalness.

Please protect our freedoms and keep public money and regulation out of private schools.

Sherri Blassingame

self

Wichita Falls, TX

As a parent and teacher, I do not agree with this bill and do not want it pass.

Betty Daugherty

self

The Woodlands, TX

VoteNo! A constitutional Amendment is not needed.

Tammy Carpenter

ATPE

Sour Lake, TX

I am opposed to any entity that receive state funding (tax dollars) but is not accountable to the same standards as is public education.

Shannon Myers

self

Temple, TX

I am opposed to using public funds for private education in any way. The notion of taxpayer money going towards programs and possibly harmful ideologies that have no accountability to the state is deeply concerning. How will the state monitor the success of these private schools and determine that tax dollars are truly being spent to benefit students? Private schools do not require certified teachers, nor do they have a record of improving academic performance.

Providing tax money to subsidize these schools will only be a burden to our state and cause private tuitions to inflate. Once that happens, the only parents with a true "choice" are the ones who could afford it in the first place. That eventuality, along with the private schools' ability to pick and choose their students, will only serve to deepen a harmful divide between student populations.

There are a multitude of possible barriers to a child attending private school that will not be overcome by simply shaving a portion off of tuition. Support with transportation, meal assistance, mental health assistance, need for special education services are all provided by our public schools. How is a private school truly a choice for a child that needs these services?

I am not opposed to the existence of private schools. Several of my family members attended a small Catholic school and it was a good fit for them. What I am opposed to is using my tax money to support the idea that this bestows parental choice. Parents already have many choices: attend your public school, transfer to another public school, pay tuition at a charter school which the state funds, pay tuition at a private school, or homeschool and pay the expenses.

Melissa Revak

Self, Teacher

Dickinson, TX

I live in the district that I work for. I do this not so I have a short commute to work, but because my property taxes to go the district that I am proud to call home. For my tax dollars to fund another public or private school would negate the entire reason I moved to the district. As an American, I am free to purchase a home where I want. I do so knowing I am helping my community grow. I gladly pay my taxes for my community. However, I disagree for that money to be funding an education program that isn't in my community.

Dawn Cook

Self/Title Policy Typist

Temple, TX

As a community member and supporter of public schools, I oppose this Bill because I believe public education should be for all. Vouchers drain resources from public schools, putting a huge financial burden on the state. Texas already ranks 40th in per-student spending and the rate of inflation since 2019 is 14.5%, per the Comptroller.

The superiority of private schools is a falsehood. Private schools are not required to hire certified teachers, they are not accountable to taxpayers, and they are not required to report student achievement data to the state.

If a parent wants choice - that already exists within the public school system. Vouchers are divisive and they discriminate. Education should be for all!

Robbie Ann Burns

Self - Nurse Aide at AISD

Alpine, TX

I do not support his bill. If a student is educated in an organized setting be it private or public, the same state regulations should apply.

Carolyn Mitchell, Rev
Texas Women for Justice
CONROE, TX

I urge the House Public Education Committee NOT to approve HJR 182. Do not siphon funds from an underfunded public education system to benefit unaccountable private and charter schools that have selective enrollment and don't have to meet state mandates for hiring certified teachers, financial transparency, or academic achievement.

Respectfully,
Rev. Carolyn Mitchell

John Buchanan
Self/self-employed
Sanger, TX

I respectfully request that public schools be fully funded and NO money be allocated for vouchers or ESAs. Parents may choose any education option they wish, but no public money can go to education that is not accountable the way public schools are accountable.

Carl Atnip
saids
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Keep your hands off public education.

Elizabeth Valenzon
myself
La Marque, TX

HJR 182-Vote No. The Texas Constitution should not be changed to allow private schools to not have any oversight or regulation.

David Espinoza
Self - STEM Teacher
El Paso, TX

All I gotta say is, you need to pay teacher more. A lot more. Otherwise you will be losing a ton of teachers. I'm very conservative yet, I don't like that money goes to charter school. I'm a public school teacher and we deal with ALL kids. We don't get to choose the kids we get. We don't get to kick them out if they don't perform. Charters do. Get it right.

Ashley R Gunn Chohlis

Poth ISD

FLORESVILLE, TX

As a taxpayer, a parent of 3 school aged children (2 of which receive special services), and a rural school district superintendent, I OPPOSE any state plan that would use vouchers, tax credits, taxpayer savings grants, tuition reimbursements, or any other means to divert public tax dollars to private entities, homeschooled students, or parents, with little or no academic or financial accountability or transparency to the state, taxpayers, or local communities. We who serve traditional public education are held to highest standards of accountability in exchange for the taxpayer dollars we're given. The double standard has gone on too long. Charters are already not held to the same standards. Legislators can not continue to divert public school funds away from public schools, while raising accountability standards, and expect public schools to educate children "successfully". Public education is the foundation of our democracy. An educated population is necessary for a civilized society. The breakdown of the family unit has already stressed our social constructs to the limit, including public education. It's one of the only things still holding this country together. During the pandemic public schools are how we got everything done in our community. Now, I serve a rural community that absolutely can not afford to lose a single student to commuter parents who can take them and their tax dollars into the city as opposed to our public school, which is "A" rated. Our teachers already don't make very much money. They work for the District because they live in the community. If even just a few parents take their kids out of our schools, it is detrimental to the entire community because jobs will be lost. In rural communities, the effects of such legislation will be crippling. I urge you to stand strong with public education and public educators, please OPPOSE any bills that divert tax dollars away from public schools. Thank you.

KAREN BROWNING, Parent

Ridgetop Elementary School Austin ISD Parent

Austin, TX

Public Education in Texas has been underfunded and under-supported for years. The last thing our children need is for the public money intended for public schools to be diverted to private ones. Please say no to all voucher/ESA proposals. Thank you.

Charlene Shafer

Self, Retired Teacher

Cypress, TX

Under vouchers, our taxpayer dollars would be taken away from public schools—which are already severely underfunded—to subsidize tuition at unregulated private and religious schools. Texas is already 49th in funding. Giving taxpayer dollars to unregulated private schools is WRONG. If no financial or educational oversight is required, taxpayer money can be used to fund private jets or numerous other unnecessary items instead of for education. NO on these voucher schemes.

Candice Campbell

Self

Gatesville, TX

Public schools are a fundamental part of the educational system because they allow for EVERY student to have an opportunity to grow and learn. Public school's funding should be on the increase and should not be decreased due to voucher programs that pick and choose students. I say NO TO VOUCHERS. Instead, I say yes to allowing equal opportunities for ALL students--public school systems.

Theresa Jurls

Self

Waco, TX

If taxpayer dollars are being used for private schools, there should be the same state regulatory and compliance measures in place as for public schools. TEA would need to manage and provide the same level of support and oversight in both arenas.

Kimbelry Bruch

self

Lockhart, TX

I am a middle school teacher for AISD. Public schools need to be funded by public dollars and those funds should not be diverted away from public education. Public schools are for all students. Saying yes to this bill would create a situation like 3rd world countries where only rich and affluent families are allowed the right to FAPE. Public education in Texas has been underfunded and under-supported for years. The last thing our 5.5 million children need is for the public money intended for public schools to be diverted to private and for profit education. How about fully funding public schools for 5-10 years and see what the return on that is before you give away money to the rich and for profit school. Please say NO to all voucher/ESA proposals.

Kevin Crusius

Young Conservatives of Texas

Austin, TX

YCT registered by accident. YCT does not support HJR 182.

Johnathon Vought, Mr.

self

Leander, TX

Oh great you wish to reduce the influence of education that is free to all while reducing the regulation to private funded educational settings. Your fascism is so transparent. You are a blight against free thinking and democracy in general. The future is bright however, because the authoritarians who would follow you will select themselves out by way of these untrue beliefs. You have to believe in truth and science in order to survive pandemics and Trump lost by some razor thin margins after 1 million americans died from covid. Turns out, disbelieving the scope and problem of covid rather than promoting the masks and real vaccines had a result. That result helped unelect him, I can only hope the same results are accomplished by you fascists.

Colleen Dale, Mrs.

Cypress-Fairbanks ISD employee and resident of Waller ISD in Harris County
Hockley, TX

OPPOSE ALL VOUCHER BILLS (aka EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS)

1. They drain funds from our public schools to private schools and vendors.
2. There is NO FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY on the use of these funds which can lead to mismanagement of our taxpayer dollars. Public schools have a school board and the TEA they must answer to.
3. There is NO STUDENT PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY. Public school students must take the STAAR test to show academic growth and achievement. Private education providers would not be subject to this requirement.
4. Private education providers DO NOT HAVE TO ACCEPT ALL STUDENTS. The choice in "school choice" is really in the power of private schools - NOT THE PARENTS.
5. Subsidizing current private school students (who do not need the money) would put a huge financial burden on the State - who is currently ranked 49th of the 50 States in funding its public schools.

As a life-long Southern Baptist, Conservative, Republican, I have always voted Republican. I come from a long line of public-school educators in Texas. My husband and I have over 21 years of service in public education. We have spent 18 of those 21 years debt free and were always fiscally responsible adults. Due to the pandemic and record inflation, we have been drowning in debt the last 3 years, which completely depleted our savings. We are both college graduates with Masters degrees and we are now struggling to keep the lights on for our family. With a record surplus, Republicans with a straight party vote denied the employees who mold the future of Texas a raise that they deserve and one that could have been funded. Teachers' cups are empty. We are going to lose several teachers new to the profession because they can afford to do something else since they are not heavily invested in TRS. The teachers that remain will be overworked and overwhelmed and underpaid and unappreciated. If the goal of Republicans was to lose the support of numerous Conservative teachers, you have definitely succeeded with your inability to put political views aside and do what is best for the people who have the most influential role (teachers) for the future of Texas. If you TRULY care about the future of the GREAT STATE OF TEXAS, like you all claim to do, you would put AS MUCH MONEY AS POSSIBLE into PUBLIC EDUCATION. Stop taking away laws that help us restore order in our schools. Hold students accountable for violent language, verbal and physical aggression toward staff and students, assaults on other students and staff, drug use, etc. Hold parents accountable for not getting their child to school. Stop making so many more laws to make it more difficult for staff who are showing up every day doing the most difficult work. Hold students and teachers accountable!!! The #1 thing that you should be doing is making a SIGNIFICANT public educator pay increase to STOP THE BLEED of those bailing on public educators.

PLEASE DO BETTER. Put the money into Texas Public Schools.

Elaina Sharron
self
Alpine, TX

We need Public Schools to be fully funded. Not everyone can pay for a private school. Plus if Public schools were funded we would have more money to help our students have a better education.

Charlene Reagan
True Texas Project
Spicewood, TX

Support
State should not ever interfere with parents right to choose the right education model for their family

Kevin Cauble
Self, Retired
Martindale, TX

Do NOT funnel MY taxpayer money to private business and to other entities that have no local control and accountability and do not compete on a leveling playing ground with public schools. Vouchers are nothing more than a scheme that diverts public funds to private schools and vendors (just look at how much their stock has gone up on the anticipation of hoodwinking the taxpayers), and undermine traditional public schools and charters, teachers, and students. The lack of public accountability in any voucher program leaves the system open to mismanagement of financial resources and lets private education providers off the hook for poor student performance.

Amir Rana
self/Teacher
Weslaco, TX

Salaries have not kept up with recent inflation, unsustainable workload, contribution to health care premiums for school teachers, and at least ten to fifteen thousand dollars will be nice.

Krista Garcia
self
San Antonio, TX

Public dollars for private schools will not improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Students and parents will have less protections. Private schools should not receive public school funds without the same accountability and oversight. Texas needs to invest in public school systems and strengthen the current system rather than outsourcing and eliminating protections and accountability. If private schools take the money, they have to take the regulations.

Becky St. John, Trustee
Self, GCISD Trustee
Grapevine, TX

I support all of the stipulations of this amendment: child's right to access to public, free schools and the state not abridge the rights of a family to utilize non-public schools. However, if any non-public setting receives public money, then that non-public setting should absolutely be transparent and accountable to taxpayers.

Mary Melinda Smith
Self/ Retired Teacher
Allen, TX

Please keep our students in free public education. We are spread to thin for the resources we have. Thank you. Melinda Smith, Retired Teacher from Plano and Allen ISD for 30 years

Trinidad Garza
ATPE
Edinburg, TX

Vote against school vouchers

Jennifer Mitchell
Shallowater ISD
Shallowater, TX

Public dollars should remain in schools. Shallowater ISD is proud to be one of the highest-performing districts in the state, why would I want my dollars to go anywhere else? As a public school district, they are required to accept ALL students, annual assessments to track student progress, public reporting of the use of taxpayer dollars, and comply with federal protections for students with disabilities. Vouchers would leave our most vulnerable (students with disabilities and middle- lower- incomes students) behind. What about those in rural areas? There aren't private schools in rural areas, so the state would be forcing those families to pay for something they don't even have access to.

Susan Stewart
self
Pflugerville, TX

I am in opposition to this bill and let the record show all bills that call for vouchers, parent empowerment, ESAs or any other disingenuous term that refers to the further defunding of our Texas public schools. Parents have always had the choice to send their child to any school. It is only now, with large corporate PACS and special interests who benefit financially from the destruction of our public schools, that this has become a wildfire. You are harming Texas school children through divisive rhetoric that condemns public schools and the teachers and admin.

In July of 2018, former Enron trader, John Arnold, joined forces with San Francisco billionaire and Netflix CEO, Reed Hastings. They each pledged \$100,000,000 to a new non-profit dedicated to selling the portfolio model of school governance. The portfolio model promotes disruption as a virtue and posits no value for stable neighborhood schools. As schools are closed or reconstituted, the new schools are not democratically controlled. This is what we are now faced with along with a financial scheme called SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS. Ask Mike Morath about those. The profit and privatization idea underlying social impact bonds is that communities basically outsource education programs.

If you want Texas public schools to compete with private schools, then level the playing field. Private schools charge \$25,000 per child. They have a teacher and two aides in each classroom, they hire various specialists to provide therapy for students. Texas legislators provide \$6,160 per child, ZERO FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION, teachers are paid \$10,000 less than the national average. Then Texas legislatures condemn public schools and call them failing. In my book, they are doing heroic work in the face of constant attacks and disparagement by our legislators. REJECT THE SCHOOL VOUCHER SCHEME TO BENEFIT A MINORITY OF CHILDREN AND FULLY FUND TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, SO WE CAN COMPETE IN A FAIR FIGHT.

Gilbert Cantu, Mr.
Self/public school educator
Corpus Christi, TX

I do not support this bill.

ANNE NEWMAN
self-consulting
Fair Oak Ranch, TX
Please pass this bill.

Marisa Iannaccone
self, former special education teacher
Cedar Park, TX

Representative Brad Buckley, Chair
Representative Alma Allen, Vice-Chair
House Committee of Public Education

RE: Tuesday, April 11th, 2023, Hearing

Opposition of HJR 182: Proposing a constitutional amendment regarding public free schools and prohibiting certain state regulation regarding private educational settings.

Good afternoon, Chair Buckley, Vice Chair Allen and members of the Committee of Public Education:

My name is Marisa Iannaccone, I represent myself as a former special education teacher with experience teaching students with low-incidence disabilities in the Austin area. Today, I want to voice my opposition to HJR182 and share why I believe different programs that provide an insurance premium tax credit would discriminate against our most vulnerable students.

Under IDEA, a Low incidence disability is defined as ‘any impairment for which a small number of staff with highly specialized skills and knowledge are needed for children with that impairment to receive a free appropriate public education.

Private schools are not required to abide by IDEA, meaning they do not have to provide a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. A student with a low-incidence disability requires multiple highly trained educators and specialists to access their education, and a majority of private schools in the state of Texas do not have such specialists on staff.

Let's look at John Doe, he is a 4th grader and qualifies for an IEP under multiple disabilities. He has Cerebral Palsy, requires a walker, is non-verbal, has visual impairment, has a seizure protocol and is working on IEP goals aligned to kindergarten TEKS. John Doe is in a low-incidence classroom, with a teacher who is highly qualified who provides specialized instruction and there are 3 instruction assistants. He receives services from Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Augmentative and Alternative Communication specialist, Visual Impairment specialist, Adapted PE, ARD specialist and more.

In a voucher system, private schools have the right to choose which students they accept. This could result in low-incidence students like John being discriminated against or excluded from private schools altogether. Private schools may not have the necessary resources or desire to provide the specialized services required for students like John. A situation like this violates Section 504 and the rehabilitation act of 1973. So, while public funds are diverted to private schools, students like John can't access them.

In summary, a voucher system would have a negative impact on students with low-incidence disabilities in Texas by reducing legal protections, educational services and increasing the opportunity for discrimination. As a former special education teacher, I urge lawmakers to consider the needs of all students, especially those with disabilities, before making any changes to the current public school system.

Christine Cockrell
myself
Gatesville, TX

Public schools are suffering significant losses due to educators leaving already. They are not paid according to the amount of work and management they are required to do. By funneling money to other entities, that further cuts funding to the districts. I teach in a rural district that does not have availability of other schools and this would further detriment the learning environment by taking funds from the current schools. We will continue to lose teachers to other schools and out of education completely.

Randy Pittenger

Self

Belton, TX

I oppose any use of public funds for private schools. Any voucher system, tax credit, or use of public funds should only be used for public schools with full public accountability that is lacking in private schools.