



Great Public Schools
for Every Student

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June 28, 2021

Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we write to share our opinion of the FY2022 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill and its treatment of the District of Columbia's private school voucher program. While we never support such programs, we are pleased that the committee has included language requiring any private school participating in the D.C. program to give students the same fundamental civil rights protections public school students receive. We are also pleased that the committee report includes language consistent with the District of Columbia's FY2022 congressional justification, which calls for phasing out the program—in effect, recognition of its serious shortcomings.

Numerous studies have documented that the D.C. voucher program does not improve academic performance—in fact, two recent Department of Education studies found that voucher students do worse academically than peers who are not part of the program. Voucher students are also less likely to have access to key services—including English as second language (ESL) programs, learning supports, special education, and counselors—than students who are not part of the program.

Whether they're called vouchers, education savings accounts (ESAs), or tuition tax credits (TTCs), the impact is the same: robbing the public schools that educate 9 out of 10 of our nation's students of scarce funding and resources. Private schools are not accountable to the public, can deprive students of religious freedom, and often fail to protect civil rights. Taxpayer dollars should go only to public schools open to all students, not private schools that can pick and choose their students based on economic status, academic achievement, or even gender.

Scarce education funding should be directed where it does most good: to the public schools that educate the overwhelming majority of students in our nation and its capital.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Egan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association