

Private School Vouchers & Students with Disabilities

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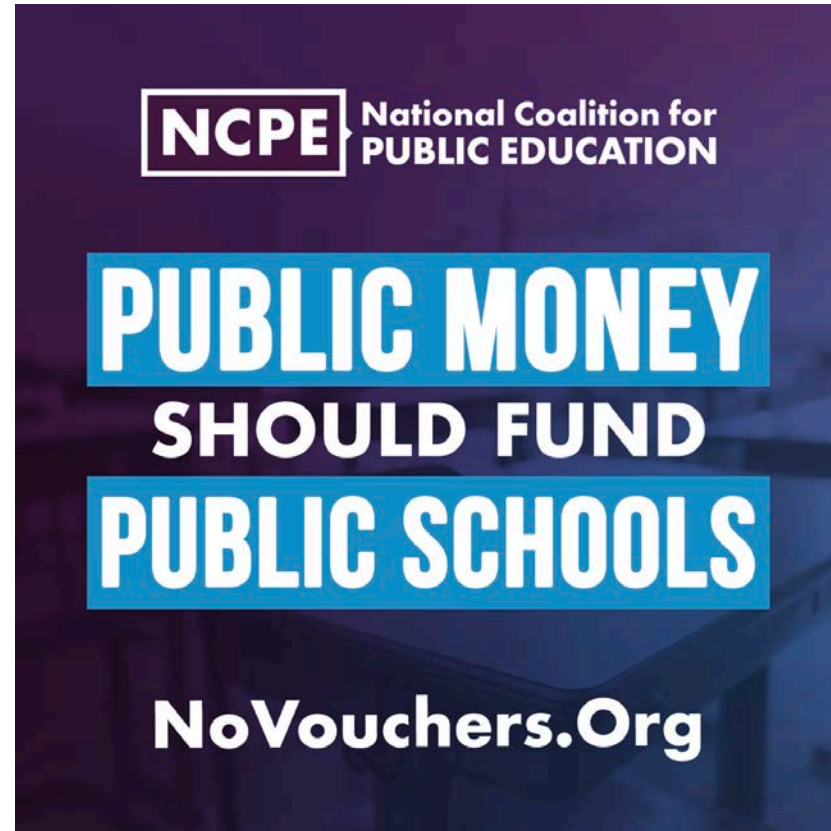
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Private School Vouchers Take Many Forms

- ▶ Traditional Vouchers
- ▶ Tuition Tax Credits
- ▶ Education Savings Accounts



Reasons to Oppose Vouchers

Violate
Principles of
Religious
Freedom

Don't Improve
Education

Don't Help
Students with
Disabilities

Don't Improve
Public Schools

Lack
Accountability

Students Lose
Rights

Don't Provide
Real Choice

Vouchers Don't
Help Kids in
Poverty

Vouchers Aren't
Popular

What Do Private School Vouchers Mean for Students with Disabilities?

- ▶ Private voucher schools can reject students for many reasons, including disability.
- ▶ Private voucher schools don't offer the same quality and quantity of services.
- ▶ Students using vouchers are considered parentally-placed in private schools.
- ▶ Voucher students forfeit rights and protections under IDEA.
- ▶ Parents aren't given complete and accurate information.

IDEA and Vouchers



What are the key provisions of IDEA that students with disabilities forfeit when they use a private school voucher?

IDEA and Vouchers

For students in public schools:

- ▶ Must be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) – including special education and related services provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP).
- ▶ Must be educated in the least restrictive environment.
- ▶ Entitled to certain protections in disciplinary procedures.
- ▶ Entitled to due process and procedural safeguards, including the right to a due process hearing.

GAO Report:
***Programs Using Public Funds for Private
School Expenses Provide Inconsistent and
Incorrect Information on Special Education
Rights (Nov. 2017)***

- ▶ GAO found that “83% of students enrolled in a program designed specifically for students with disabilities were in a program that provided either no information or inaccurate information about changes in IDEA rights.”
- ▶ Parents reported feeling that they lacked the necessary information to make an informed decision.

Vouchers at the Federal level

President Trump's Budget: \$1 Billion for Vouchers

DC Voucher Program

Federal Tuition Tax Credits

ESAs for Military-Connected Students

The Education Savings Accounts for Military Families Act (H.R. 5199/S. 2517)



- Introduced by Rep. Jim Banks (R-IN) and Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC) and Sen. Ben Sasse (R-NE)
- Uses Impact Aid to fund Education Savings Accounts for students
- Eligible students: Students (ages 0-22) living on military bases with active duty parents (not National Guard)
- Voucher amount: \$2500 (at most \$4500)

What is Impact Aid?

Provides assistance to local school districts that are impacted by the presence of tax-exempt Federal property.

These school districts face two distinct problems:

1. Federal ownership of property reduces local tax income for school purposes.
2. A federal project/activity causes an influx of people into a community, resulting in an increased number of children needing an education.

Examples of “Federal Impaction”

- Military installation
- Indian Trust, Treaty, or Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act land
- Federal low rent housing facilities
- Civil service activities: VA hospitals, laboratories, parks

The Solution: Impact Aid

- ▶ Supplements school districts' lost tax revenue
- ▶ Popular: bipartisan support
- ▶ Efficient: Every dollar appropriated by Congress goes directly to school districts
- ▶ Flexible: The use of Impact Aid is determined locally.
- ▶ Funds can be used for hiring and training teachers and staff, purchasing buses and classroom equipment, providing educational programming, including for students with disabilities, and more.

The Basics of Impact Aid

- ▶ Signed into law in 1950 and administered by Dept. of Education (Title VII of ESSA)
- ▶ \$1.3 billion to school districts to approximately 1,300 school districts enrolling more than 11 million public school students.
- ▶ Including \$48 million specifically for students with disabilities.
 - ▶ This additional payment is for Indian land and military students with an active IEP.
 - ▶ Funds *must* be spend on an IDEA eligible activity.
 - ▶ This funding is included in funds targeted for vouchers under HR 5199/ S 2517.

This Bill Will Hurt Military and Non-Military Students

- ▶ Diverts Impact Aid funding from school districts and funnels the money to private and unaccountable education providers.
- ▶ Leaves fewer resources for students in public schools, including both military and non-military students.
- ▶ Primarily benefits families who can already afford a private school education for their child.
- ▶ Can use funding for K-12 students for early education expenses, 529 college savings accounts.
- ▶ Undermines the public schools serving the vast majority of students.

Opposition from Military Groups

“Using Impact Aid dollars to fund Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) for military-connected students would be financially devastating for many school districts, critically compromising the quality of the education they could provide to military children and their civilian classmates.”

- The Military Coalition Letter 4/5/18

Outlook – NDAA FY 2019

- ▶ Amendment could be added to National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) FY 2019.
- ▶ Vouchers could be funded by Impact Aid or create pilot program using other funding source.



For More Information



Check out NCPE's website:

NoVouchers.org