

Good Afternoon Chairwoman and Committee Members,

I oppose HB 2552.

I don't doubt that Representatives Erickson and Williams want to help kids, but this bill is a trap, for "school choice" has *long* been the planned mechanism to ensnare private schools and to bring them into the fold – in order to force them to teach the very ideologies that many parents want to escape. Publicly-funding private schools are dangerous, for they have no elected school boards, therefore no citizen representation to ensure public monies are spent teaching what the public, as a whole is in favor of. This explains the danger of another type of "choice": charter schools -- for they, too, use public monies without representation of the public.

To put it simply: money following the child is really the government following the child, for when government subsidizes a program, they have the obligation to regulate it. This is not choice! This bill is full of anti-choice language, as all of these types of bills are:

**P1 – The "qualified" private school must be approved by the treasurer and be in "good standing", whatever that means.

**P1—The child "must take the state assessment for ELA", an assessment that is aligned with KS College and Career Ready Standards (AKA a re-brand of the ideologically-driven and parent-hated Common Core Standards).

**P 3--There are other strings. "Allowable fund uses" are determined by the treasurer, as are the "responsibilities" of the parent. It says, "The parent of such eligible student shall enter into a written agreement with the treasurer, in such a manner & form described by the treasurer." This is not choice!!

There's much more regulatory language in this bill and this is *always* the case whenever one accepts government funds -- state or federal. The goal of free and Constitutionally-minded citizens should be to resist more government involvement in education.

In March of 1984, the US Supreme Court made it clear that private schools are subject to government regulations if they enroll students with government money. Examples are scholarships, loans, grants, accounts. <https://www.iaheaction.net/parental-observations-regarding-their-voucher-accepting-school/>

Private schools (in Indiana) who refused to participate in a voucher program cited concerns about independence, character and the identity of the school. All of those concerns have come true for the private parochial schools in Indiana who *did* accept vouchers. There's no way around it; government handouts always come with strings for parents and schools.

Here are comments from families who have already been down this path ("Parental Observations Regarding their Voucher-accepting School" , Jan 24, 2017 <https://www.iaheaction.net/parental-observations-regarding-their-voucher-accepting-school/>)

--"even with the best of intentions, government funding has unintended consequences"

--“The vouchers were started with parents being told that there would be few changes for the private school: the main change being that parents and schools would see an increase in funds.”

--“At least two schools had already purchased books and were told to use different ones, or they would lose their accreditation from the state as well as voucher money.”

--“All students take the ISTEP test which is aligned to Common Core State Standards (CCSS). “

--“Each student, including those who do not receive vouchers take the test. Every student in this school has become part of the federal data base. . . . in essence, the . . . government can tell the schools what to teach.”

--“the . . . [private] schools are quick to say that the state is not telling what curriculum to use, and this is [technically] true. The state, instead, has chosen to use the state standards as the guidelines that each school must meet that takes the vouchers. “ (notice the carrot and stick pattern here?) “. . . schools now teach to the standards.”

--This article said, “Every child [in this private school] has been affected by the vouchers, even those who do not receive one, as everything is now aligned to the state standards.”

--“A study that was released a little over a year ago revealed that students with vouchers lost significantly in math and they had zero gains in English.” For now, this bill only requires ELA remediation, but would soon add the infamous CCSS math standards, too?

--One can be certain that as long as money is taken from the state for a school, accountability will follow that money ***and at any time these conditions can change for better or worse.***” (my emphasis)

Our local schools are gone. They are just gone. The solution is not to contaminate the remaining private and home schools with a fake “school choice” snare, but to regain local control of standards and curriculum. The only way this can be done is to first understand the history of this mess. I refer you to Charlotte Iserbyt’s book, “The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America” and to her article entitled, “School Choice is America’s Trojan Horse” (both available here <https://newswithviews.com/iserbyt/iserbyt115.htm>).

Anita Hoge also has a firm handle on this issue and the awful plan for America’s schools which has all but unfolded before our very eyes. Two articles of particular interest are “Tax-Credit Scholarships Are A Risk To Representative Government” (July 19, 2019) <https://thewashingtonstandard.com/tax-credit-scholarships-are-a-risk-to-representative-government/> and “Choice – The Ki\$\$ of Death” <https://thewashingtonstandard.com/school-choice-the-ki-of-death/>

Thank you for your time,

Rosy Schmidt