



July 24, 2018

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20010

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our three million members and the 50 million students they serve, we write to share our opinion about the increase in funding for the District of Columbia private school voucher program in the FY2019 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, coming to the Senate floor as a part of a broader appropriations package. We believe that Congress should not allocate millions of taxpayer dollars to this ineffective program, and certainly should not increase funding as this bill seeks to do.

A rigorous, [congressionally-mandated study](#) released in May 2018 by the Institute of Education Sciences, part of the U.S. Department of Education, found that District of Columbia students who used vouchers to attend private schools performed significantly worse in mathematics — 10 percentage points — than a control group of students who applied for the program but were not chosen through a lottery. Voucher students also scored lower in reading.

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 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.

For all of the above reasons, we find an increase in funding for the District of Columbia private school voucher program problematic. We encourage you to support, instead, redirecting that funding to the public schools that educate the overwhelming majority of the students in our nation's capital.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association