



SB 3 Vouchers: A False Promise of School Choice Cloaking an Unaccountable Entitlement for a Select Few

Latest Voucher Scheme Would Take Money from Local Public Schools

Summary: SB 3 is a voucher bill. This session's voucher flavors, both included in SB3, are Education Savings Accounts (ESA's) and an insurance premium tax credit. ESA's are an entitlement for a select group of parents who would get a tax-funded account or debit card to pay for tuition, curriculum, computers, etc. Tax Credit vouchers would allow businesses or individuals to count donations to private school "scholarships" against insurance premium tax liability.

SB 3 diverts state funds from public schools to private, religious and corporate-run schools

At a time when Texas schools are woefully under-funded, taxpayers cannot afford to pay for two separate school systems – one private and one for over 90% of Texas children who attend public schools. Giving an ESA to 600,000 homeschooled and private school would cost billions.

SB 3 provides no accountability for taxpayer dollars

SB3 would funnel tax dollars to private and religious schools without requiring them to meet curriculum and fiscal standards required of a neighborhood public schools.

SB 3 is an entitlement for the affluent

Contrary to the rhetoric of voucher advocates, SB 3 would give greater access to families with income over 200% of the poverty level than those who live in poverty or students with disabilities – whose educational costs are typically higher. SB3 would help families who could afford to cover additional tuition and transportation costs, not children in poverty.

SB 3 would expand government

ESA's would require the comptroller's office to create staff positions and conduct audits of ESA expenditures. SB 3 would also bring government into private and homeschool parents and children.

SB 3 violates the separation of church and state

ESA's SB3 states that "the content or religious nature of a product or service may not be considered in determining whether a payment for the product or service is an expense allowed." Using state funds to purchase curriculum with a religious orientation violates the first amendment.