



HB 58 Voucher Bill Opposed by Coalition for Public Schools

Summary: HB 58 would provide a credit against an entity's state premium insurance tax liability. This credit goes to fund non-public school tuition managed by an educational assistance organization and thereby diverts tax monies away from public schools to private schools. The Coalition for Public Schools opposes this voucher bill on the following grounds:

- **Texas cannot afford to fund two school systems, one public and private system, when schools are already shortchanged.** Texas is currently in the bottom quarter of states in per pupil funding for public schools and lags far below 2008 pre-recession per-pupil funding levels when adjusted for inflation. When a public school student uses a tax credit voucher, the public school loses the revenue, but not the cost for teachers, utilities, facilities, etc. Over time, the cost of vouchers could siphon off even more education dollars should limits be expanded and unlimited home schools and virtual schools get into the act. We simply can't afford to pay for a private education system when we don't properly fund the one we have.
- **No accountability for voucher tax dollars** – Under HB 58, private schools would not be required to meet state curriculum requirements or maintain the same fiscal accountability as public schools. Texans overwhelmingly believe that schools that receive tax dollars should be accountable for how they are spent, but the schools that receive tax credit vouchers would not be accountable to taxpayers.
- **Subsidizes the wealthy at the expense of others that can't afford it** - Tax credit voucher schemes like HB 58 are inherently designed to be used by those who generate enough income to "need" a tax break. Economically disadvantaged parents would not be able to use a voucher unless they could afford pay the difference between the voucher check and the actual tuition, in addition to the cost of transportation. Other taxpayers would pay the price for vouchers that would primarily benefit those who could afford expensive private schools.
- **Students with disabilities give up their rights** – Under HB 58, "students with a disability attending an eligible nonpublic school may not receive the services a student with a disability attending a public school is entitled to receive under federal and state law". This results in a loss of federal and state protections for these students that have been put in place to ensure that they receive a quality education