



SB 2 – A Voucher That Harms Students with Disabilities

SB 2 is a voucher bill. SB 2 contains Education Expense Assistance and a state premium tax credit. Tax Credit vouchers would allow businesses or individuals to count donations to private school “scholarships” against state premium tax liability and would funnel taxpayer money to private and corporate schools for students with a disability. We oppose this bill on the following grounds:

SB 2 takes taxpayer funds directly from public schools and provides no real funding

SB 2 diverts taxpayer funds from public schools to be used in private, religious, and corporately run schools. Aside from the 450,000 special education students in Texas, the inclusion of 504 students opens the door for any student with a “life impairment” (e.g. asthma, hearing loss, anxiety, etc.) and could cost billions of dollars. With Texas public schools already being underfunded, Texas can’t afford the voucher in SB 2.

Parents and students give up their federal protections under SB 2

Students with disabilities in special education receiving a voucher under SB 2 would give up their federal protections upon exiting the public school. This includes their rights to due process under admissions, review and dismissal (ARD) committees and other federal protections. This is actually harmful to students with a disability.

No accountability under SB 2

Private and religious schools that would access taxpayer dollars through SB 2 are not accountable to the state in the same way as public schools. SB 2 would allow these schools to receive taxpayer monies while not meeting the same curriculum nor fiscal requirements of a Texas public school. Texans overwhelmingly believe that schools that receive tax dollars should be accountable for how they are spent, but the schools that receive vouchers would not be accountable to taxpayers.

SB 2 violates the separation of church and state and the first amendment

SB 2 provides monies that can be used in any private or religious school. Earlier voucher bills that this was modeled from provided no disallowance for religious content or services. Taxpayer funds used for religious content or services violates the first amendment.