**PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CHARTER SCHOOLS, VOUCHER PROGRAMS**

Tennessee’s national ranking is in the mid-40’s in funding for public school education. At a time when public school funding, teacher pay and morale is at an all-time low, Bill Lee and the Tennessee Legislature want to take more money from our schools and give it to their friend’s charter schools.

**THE PURPOSE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS:** In a country that is founded upon the shared value of equal opportunity, all children must have access to an education that enables them to be full and productive participants in civic, social, economic and community life. Fully funding public schools keep property values high, keep crime low, ensures better jobs with better wages and stronger and safer communities. We all benefit when children are educated.

**HOW VOUCHERS WORK:** The current financial requirement to qualify per household: 2 people less than $42,796; 3 people less than $54,028; 4 people household less than $65,260. If you qualify, the voucher is currently set at about $7,000. **Most private schools currently operate at a cost that is much more than a voucher is worth.** So how does a family cover the difference? Governor Lee suggests parents take out a loan that must be paid back with interest. How does a working-class family that is already struggling to pay the bills, pay a loan for education too? This just creates more debt for already struggling families.

**THE PROBLEM WITH PRIVATE CHARTER SCHOOLS:**

* Typically, students at private schools with voucher support are kids that would be there anyway. Vouchers are public funds that are covering part of the tuition, at the expense of public schools. Their parents were paying it all before.
* They do not accept all students and can refuse any child. They often do not take special ed students, especially those with severe disabilities. When a child is kicked out permanently, they are sent back to public schools without funding. This creates a bigger burden for the public school.
* **School choice means the schools choose – not parents!**
* No state in the country that uses a voucher system has students performing better than their public-school peers.
* Voucher programs only drain more money from the public schools, which WILL impact every city and county school.
* They are not governed by elected school boards. There is no oversight or transparency with our public tax dollars.
* Republican State Representative Bob Ramsey has publicly revealed his belief that **privatizing public schools has long been a part of the Voucher Agenda**.

Many thanks to State Representative Gloria Johnson for educating us on vouchers in her Facebook Livestream. You can watch her videos at:

Part 1 - <https://www.facebook.com/VoteGloriaJohnson/videos/1064986791055338>

Part 2 - <https://www.facebook.com/VoteGloriaJohnson/videos/587191756089436>

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CHARTER SCHOOLS, VOUCHER PROGRAMS**

***WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?***



**Voucher Programs**

* Are run by a private board.
* Accepted in Private schools – **do not follow any guidelines** of public schools.
* Do not have to report donated funds.
* **Definitely choose students** they will take and many permanently kick students out.
* **Do not have to** take special needs students, often require them to sign out of special ed to attend, which means they forego their state and federal rights.
* **Do not have to** hire certified teachers.
* **Do not have to** teach certain curriculum.
* **Do not require** Art, Music, PE and Library- staff or facilities.
* **Do not have to** offer free lunch, uniforms, transportation and may require fees.

**Public schools**

* Public schools are governed by **elected** school boards.
* Public schools **take every child** in the community. Public schools cannot kick out a child permanently.
* Public schools serve students with **any and all** disabilities.
* **Hire certified** teachers.
* Have to **teach a standard curriculum** including Art, Music, PE, and Library- staff or facilities.
* **Provide free lunch and transportation**.
* Their buildings are built and maintained with tax dollars.
* People with no children pay the same taxes as those with children, yet do not directly use school services. Most are happy to do so be-cause we all benefit from the results of good schools in the community.

**Charters Schools**

* Are not governed by elected school boards, but **a private board**. They have **for-profit management companies** that manage them.
* They don’t have to report donated funds.
* **Cherry-pick students** and permanently kick students out.
* They take some special needs students **but fewer and usually those with less** involved disabilities.
* Hire certified teachers.
* Do have to teach a standard curriculum.
* **Often don’t have** Art, Music, PE, and Library- staff or facilities.
* Do have free lunch, usually transportation and fees usually waived.
* Their buildings are owned by private corporations.

Website: www.[SevierDemocrats.com](http://sevier.tndp.org/)

Facebook/Twitter/Instagram: [SevierDemocrats](https://www.facebook.com/sevierdemocrats/)

Email: SevierCoTNDemocrats@gmail.com