

Comment Report

SSB 1022

A bill for an act relating to education programs and funding by establishing an education savings account program, modifying certain school district categorical funding supplements, making appropriations, providing penalties, and including effective date and retroactive applicability provisions.

Subcommittee Members: Sinclair-CH, Donahue, Quirnbach, Rozenboom, Zaun

Date: 01/12/2023

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: Room G15

Name: Katie Kuehn

Comment: Iowa was regarded as one of the best states for a public education and unfortunately due to continual cuts in budgets, we are not any more. My parents were both public school teachers, many family members are still working in the public schools. They need MORE resources to meet the needs of all students, not less. Also, public schools are responsible to tailor education for all students, providing different learning strategies and opportunities to meet the unique needs of students. Private schools do not have to do this nor is there any government oversight or accountability for how or what they teach. Parents should be able to send their children to private schools if they do choose but those schools shouldnt be funded by government money if they arent also being held accountable by the same government for providing a standard of care and education for ALL students with varying needs and abilities. Please VOTE NO to vouchers. These vouchers would be incredibly detrimental to our states future our children.

Name: Deborah Erickson

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools. If you are making the decision to send your child to private school then you should already have those funds. Invest in our public schools and make education a priority in Iowa. Education in Iowa used to be one of the best. Invest in public education and make it so again

Name: Beth Arnold

Comment: Please FULLY FUND our public schools and stop trying to privatize education. This bill does nothing but hurt most of our children and our state. Public money for public schools!

Name: Laura Cameron

Comment: I am a mom of 6th grader, 3rd grader, and preschooler in public schools. The future of Iowa public schools is their future and right now, that terrifies me. While our family cannot afford private schools that is not the only barrier. Many of my childrens peers have special needs. No private schools accept special education children. Many of my childrens peers do not speak English as a first language. They also arent accepted at private schools. There are no private schools anywhere close to where these children live. As a state we should be making a great option for all kids not giving money to organizations that will not serve many Iowans. Families still have the right to send their children where they want to. Every private school I know of offers scholarships which means they are doing just fine. And actually now that I think about it special Ed and our refugee population doesnt have true choice. They cant choose a private school so if you are looking for freedom for all, you are barking up the wrong tree. Stop supporting special interest and consider the future of our state.

Name: Carolyn Kelly

Comment: It should be very clear by now that Iowans do NOT want public money to go to private schools. STOP trying to pass this legislation and instead turn your attention to fully and adequately funding Iowa's public schools.

Name: Jodi Solomon

Comment: If we as a state are going to fund private schools, then those schools must be held to the same standards as all public schools in Iowa. The teachers and administrators must have to follow all of the same state mandated requirements as public educators must, and the school boards and schools as well. They must accept all students with IAP's and support them adequately as public schools are required. This is not as simple as many are making it. Private school is a choice and should remain that, but not funded by the tax payers. If everyone can attend a private school, what's the allure to them in the future? We need to focus on making our public schools what they used to be. We need to support and keep the excellent educators we have in this State. Our education system isn't falling behind because of the teachers, it's because of the lack of support for them and funding for public school programs within.

Name: Paul Stough

Comment: If the Government of the State of Iowa really wants "school choice" for our kids, then a voucher should cover the total cost of sending kids to the school the parents choose, and the school has to accept them, otherwise, vouchers are just a subsidy for the parents who are already sending their kids to private schools. In other states who have vouchers 70 to 90% of the money goes to parents who are already sending their kids to private schools. Also, public schools are government schools, so if public schools are failing, it is the fault of the Government of the State of Iowa. The ultimate question is what do the supporters of vouchers have to gain by supporting vouchers?

Name: Matt Alexander

Comment: As a taxpayer from a rural area of Iowa I am strongly opposed to utilizing public tax dollars to fund private schools when the entity receiving funds is not accountable to the same standards and regulations as our public schools. This plan does not serve a public purpose. It funnels public dollars to private organizations with little to no transparency requirements. If this is the path that state government wants to pursue then I would like a voucher (savings account) to pay for a fire suppression system in my home and I will opt out of public fire services for my home. I know...doesn't make sense right? Exactly. Fully fund the needs of public schools, and truly support the efforts of educators and you will see the teacher shortage go away because educators will be respected, not demonized. There are many ways to ensure we are putting top quality people in front of our kids. With the proper funding and adequate oversight we can make that happen. Poking holes in an already half empty bucket doesn't help the situation.

Name: Tanya Bodenstedt

Comment: As a public school parent, and mother of a child with dyslexia who receives extra support through an IEP, I ask that you please vote NO to vouchers. Public schools cannot continue to be drained of their resources. They are responsible to meet the needs of all students, regardless of socioeconomic circumstances and disabilities. Private schools do not have the same accountability for who or what they teach and therefore should not receive government funding. Let's reinvest in public schools and put Iowa back on top.

Name: Cecilia Norris

Comment: Iowa Public Schools provided me the strong basic education that I needed to become a physician. I began my Iowa education by attending a private (Catholic) school in Iowa but even in 5th and 6th grade, it was clear to me that I was not valued as a female and I was not encouraged to use critical thinking skills or express

individuality. I was fortunate to have the option to attend public schools and follow my dreams. I returned to Iowa after training and brought my amazing husband who has brought millions of dollars in grants to the University of Iowa. One of the strongest things that convinced him was the strength of Iowa public schools. Now that our children are grown, they have either left the state or are looking to leave the state for many reasons but the lack of support for public education is a huge factor. In speaking to excellent physicians who are considering relocating to Iowa, I have heard concerns about educational opportunities for their children outside the Iowa City area. I, myself will not suffer as much as most because I am a highly educated, wealthy, white woman whose job is in high demand in other states. My children have opportunities to pursue their dreams in states that won't limit their rights, discriminate based on gender identity and who will offer better options for teachers and stronger education for THEIR children in PUBLIC SCHOOLS. I love the state of Iowa. I consider it my home. I have chosen to give back to the people of the state who supported my education through tax dollars by providing medical care to those who do not have insurance at the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic. I want to be able to stay in Iowa but if my (future) grandchildren live far away, the draw of Iowa will be so much less. Please realize the value that Iowa Public Schools have. THEY need to be fully funded and teachers supported instead of being threatened with lawsuits and jail time. PLEASE pay attention to the realities of what is happening in our communities and stop listening to educationforprofit entities who are only out for money.

Name: Amanda Acton

Comment: I am in opposition to this bill for the following reasons. I do not support spending money earmarked for public schools on private schools that are not held to the same standards as public schools. Private schools do not provide an equitable education to students with disabilities and can actively discriminate against students based on their religion, gender, and race or ethnicity. I also do not agree with the language in the bill that allows for transfer of ESA funding to the general fund should a student not use it for either public or private schools. That further punishes public schools at a time when they need MORE funding, not less. And, I am against the portion that seems to reward schools for not spending money on teacher development or gifted programming by allowing them to spend it on teacher salaries. Teacher salaries should not be tied to this bill at all, and schools should not be forced to choose between paying teachers and providing quality education options. I want to be clear I am not against making private schools more accessible in theory. I am against defunding public schools to do so.

Name: Marla Mayberry

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools, which serve 90%+ of our Iowa children. Please do not allow vouchers or educational savings accounts in our state. It will greatly harm our public schools, which are foundational for our state to grow & thrive.

Name: DJ Hassel

Comment: I would urge the legislators to use public school funds for public schools only. It has long been understood that if you wanted to send your child to a parochial or private school that you would stand the cost of it as well as receiving tuition grants from the school and alumni. And while you are at it, please fund the public schools with funds that match the cost of living. Public schools have been shorted hundreds of thousands of dollars in the recent past. Thank you.

Name: Ashley Asberry

Comment: As a mom of children in elementary school I could not oppose this any stronger. As taxpayers, my husband and I are furious that public tax dollars could be funneled into private schools especially with how underfunded our Current public educational system is. Iowa is ranked 40th in the nation for the increase in per pupil expenditures from 2014 to 2019 and the states per pupil funding is below the national average.

This voucher program would take \$55 million of public funds to go to private school. And this does not even equate for the funds that will be lost for the smaller public schools because of the money they will no longer qualify for with less children attending there. Additionally, I'm very concerned about the inevitable violation of separation of church and state due to the percentage of Iowa private schools that are religious based, as well as the devastating effects this will have on our friends and family with children in rural Iowa. Selling a voucher program under the guises of freedom of choice and equality and access to a good private education is deceiving because 75% of Iowa communities do not have access to a private school. I would ask freedom of choice for WHOM???. Finally, public schools are the great equalizer. They welcome everyone from all incomes, languages, learning differences and backgrounds and ensures children have exposures and experience with this. The same is not true for private schools. Elected officials are trusted to use taxpayer money in ways that benefit all not the 2% of Iowa this will benefit. The public educational system will crumble if Reynolds program is forced through. A thriving society depends on a public educational system. If you want to start funding parents choice for private schools why don't you start taxing the religious organizations conducting these schools and use that money for those parents. Do not allow theft from public schools

Name: Rose Green

Comment: Can Iowa afford to fund two separate but not equal school systems? Iowa private and public schools are not required to play by the same accountability rules. Is that accountable to Iowa's taxpayers? This bill requires zero of these public school accountability measures for a private school to receive a voucher. Universal vouchers in Iowa will further pull resources away from public school students while keeping the regulations on public schools restrictive. Will voucher schools accept all Iowa's children? Iowa's public schools educate the children private/voucher schools won't. This is often because students need more services than the private/voucher school provide. Is it truly parent freedom if ultimately the voucher school is choosing the child not the parent choosing the voucher school? My three kids are the future of Iowa along with the 480,000+ public school children across Iowa. We moved here because of Iowa's commitment for strong public schools. They need to be wholly invested in to compete and to be contributing citizens when they graduate. Public school kids deserve what private school students receive but can't because they aren't required to play by the same set of rules.

Name: Andrew Kelley

Comment: I am writing in opposition to the proposed voucher bill. Our public tax dollars are for our public schools. It is both reckless and irresponsible to divert our tax dollars to private and for-profit schools. These schools are not accountable or transparent to Iowa tax payers, and they are not held to the same education standards or antidiscrimination standards. Our public schools and teachers need state support more than ever. Please represent our communities, and oppose the voucher bill. Drew Kelley Clinton, IA

Name: Sharon Fife

Comment: Public schools need support. They do not need it taken away to fund private education where institutions are profiting off taxpayers and not being held accountable for student outcomes. This is a direct path to allowing discrimination in education. If this moves forward Iowa will never be a leader in education ever again. I spend an incredible amount of time volunteering in schools and to raise funds for schools. Our teachers are working so hard. They are so skilled and love our students! They need additional funding and support. Not to have their governor say parents know best so now you get even less support.

Name: Alicia Coleman

Comment: Public dollars for public schools.

Name: Nicole Stiles

Comment: The governor and sponsors of this bill are choosing to incentivize parents to opt out of public education in favor of subpar private schools and homeschooling, with zero oversight. Compulsory public education drives generational economic mobility and ensures citizens have adequate knowledge to fulfill the overall goal of producing an educated public. If members of our state house and senate are so keen to make improvements to Iowa's education system they should invest the exorbitant expenses written into this bill into funding public education with better resources and programs such as universal prek.

Name: Kristine Bullock

Comment: I was born and raised in Iowa and was fortunate to attend great K12 public schools and the University of Iowa. After college, I was like many new graduates who couldn't wait to spread my wings and moved to Tennessee. I taught in Memphis City Schools and saw first hand how underfunding public schools and pushing private schools has an extremely negative impact on students. In the 1970s over 100 new private schools opened in the city and resources left the schools. By the time I began teaching, less than 30% of our students were proficient in math, many of my high school students couldn't read and the classes were filled with special needs students while nonspecial Ed students fled to the private schools. The teachers were overwhelmed and all students were falling behind. The district tried magnet schools which reduced a sense of community as students were spread across the city and the concept of neighborhood schools was lost. When I had my first child, we specially chose to move back to Iowa for the schools. Nothing else. Now I am appalled by the lack of real understanding about the long term consequences of these vouchers. We need to give schools more flexibility in how they spend their funds so they can reduce class sizes, offer competitive pay and innovate. Throwing a bunch of single year grants or special projects at schools is not going to improve them. We need to stop assuming that people outside of education are experts in how to run and improve education. We don't allow educators to go to corporations in the state and tell them the specifics of how they should do their work. Support Iowa schools, invite their ideas and really think about the significant consequences of these vouchers that are so difficult to fix. Do your research and look at districts that lose a lot of students to private schools. It's a disgrace what it does to public schools.

Name: Kristi Wickre

Comment: Public schools have been under funded for many years now. Instead of using public money for vouchers to private schools which are not open and inclusive of all learners, all money for education should be going to public schools. All of our state leaders should be ensuring that our public schools are fully funded and can once again be the best. This should be more important than having a surplus or giving money to private schools who can raise money in other ways and have zero accountability to tax payers. No one I know is in favor of this bill. No to vouchers!

Name: Denise Perez

Comment: What the state proposes is basically a reward to parents who unenroll from public school rather than being one that actually funds other educational opportunities. Private school education is not held accountable the same way public schools are. The understanding of the value of public education as a mechanism for generational economic mobility is the very reason private entitlement programs are supported by big dark money groups. This is not about parental choice, it is about destroying public education. I really wish all this energy that is invested in vouchers was directed at solving the actual issues with our education system which stem mainly from poor funding. According to the National Center for Ed Statistics, in the 1960s and 70s and into the 1980s, Iowa spent more than the national average per pupil. Iowa's school funding formula used to be 70% property taxes and 30% state

funding. Now its flipped. Iowa is \$1254 below the national average in perpupil spending today. In 1983, at the start of former Governor Terry Branstads first term, it was 3% more than the national average. Teacher salary and changing demographics are the big challenges today. The percentage of students on free and reduced lunch in Iowa has doubled from 20% to 40%. More kids come from lowincome families, meaning more resources are needed to address mental health needs, food insecurity and homelessness. The vast majority of Iowans have no kids in public school and this puts them on the outside and makes them susceptible to lies, like litter boxes in schools.

Name: Leslie Mooney

Comment: I am very much against the school voucher for private schools. Vouchers undermine strong public education and student opportunity. They will take away much needed funding from public schools and give to private schools that are not accountable to taxpayers. Students with special needs would more then likely not be able to attend private school as they are not required to accept disabled and special needs students. Rural communities will be decimated by vouchers and will inevitably end up with more consolidation, kids on buses for hours and loss of teachers which are already hard to come by. How can public schools improve if they lose those vital resources? We should be using our budget surplus to make the public schools better for the majority of kids who attend them. 75% of Iowa kids have no access to private schools. Other states have shown that these programs have failed and have had terrible outcomes for student learning and education scores.

Name: Holle Maricle

Comment: Our rural school district struggles to retain teachers. My high school senior has *never* in 4 years had a full year of Spanish instruction from a teacher qualified to teach Spanish. Removing more funding will not make these struggles better.

Name: Deborah Obermeier

Comment: OUTRAGEOUS. This should be voted on by all Iowans! What is proposed is unfair to the thousands of students who have NO private schools near them. PLUS private schools dont have to have the same rules that public schools do. Why Am I expected with my taxes to fund private schools? While were at it we should vote for TERM LIMITS! My kids attended private school I PAID FOR IT!

Name: Twila Finkelstein

Comment: As a lifetime Iowa resident, I love Iowa. However, we are making some dangerous decisions in our government, and it appears there are many more on the line. We used to have members in our government that worked for all the people, and now we have too many who are working for votes so they stay in their jobs. We need to make sure every person is given equal respect, dignity and access to high quality education. My greatest concern right now is that our governor is working to basically buy loyalty of those who choose to send their children to private schools by giving the schools money per child, which will reduce the tuition parents must pay to have their children attend private schools. I attended private school K 12. My dad was on the school board more years than not. The belief of the parents back then was; keep government out of our schools so we do not need to live according to any state rules. When money comes from the government there are always strings attached. No state money should ever go to schools that retain the right to refuse anyone access to their school. In our family we lived very economically so that my dad could pay the tuition. We had a tiny home with 2 bedrooms and 4 girls shared one bedroom for many years while our parents share the other. We had one bathroom for the 6 of us (until my grandpa build a bigger kitchen on the house and we dug out a basement under it by shovel and bucket and my parents moved into a little bedroom with bathroom under it.) When people choose private school education, there will be decisions about how money is spent and maybe there will be sacrifices made. And that is fine. That is the way it should be. I am sure that if my dad was still alive he

would still believe the Christian school should not receive money from the government. I believe that too.

Name: Amanda Robertson

Comment: ESAs cannot not give everyone more choices. Public schools are required to accept all students. The states most vulnerable students will never have a choice. They rely on bussing or special education services that private schools are not required to provide. Your focus should be on improving public schools that are truly accessible to everyone.

Name: Pam Nims

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill. It will not do what the ads say it will. The fact that I am subjected to repeated advertising to sell this bill is the first clue that it is bad for Iowans. The result of this bill will be to the extreme detriment of public schools, particularly those in rural areas. The bill provides no required oversight of the public tax dollars being sent to private entities. The state has an obligation to fund an equal education for ALL iowa students. This bill will result in further educational inequities. If the supporters of this bill would like to support private schools, they can do so with their own funds, not taxpayer money. I am deeply invested in Iowa schools as a graduate of a small town Iowa public school, raising two daughters in the public schools, and one of my daughters pursuing a degree in education. I have spent many hours in our public school system as a volunteer. These schools are filled with dedicated professionals who are working tirelessly for Iowas future. Put our taxpayer funds in the public schools only it benefits all Iowans.

Name: Kathleen Sharon

Comment: Simply public dollars should only go to public schools. As a teacher who attended private school for preschool to 8th grade. Then attended DMPS for high school. I saw what happens at both private and public schools. We should not offer public money to private schools. Ive seen personally what they hide and dont offer to all students. Thankfully I had good experience at both schools but I saw two many children who did not have a great experience in the private school setting and not just the one I attended.

Name: Lyndi FlugumCollins

Comment: Most Iowans believe that improving support of Iowas public schools is the best path forward for our states children. Iowa used to be recognized for its education programs strengths. States that currently subsidize private schools instead of fully supporting their public schools are seeing lifealtering negative impacts in their students that will take generations to repair. Instead of listening to the special interest groups, listen to Iowans. We are saying that we know the best path forward is to improve support in Iowas public schools.

Name: Kristin Stanford

Comment: Vouchers are wrong for Iowa. We have been a state that has strong public schools, which is why my husband and I moved back to raise our children here. Public dollars should stay with public schools who accept ALL children and have financial transparency.

Name: Nicole Hildenbrand-Elgin

Comment: I do not support the voucher program. Please use public funds for public schools that will support and educate ALL students. I am the parent of a student with a disability who can be turned away by a private school even with a voucher because they may not be equipped to provide him with the education he deserves. Our public schools do an incredible job at providing great services to ALL students when they are appropriately funded. Fund public schools, not vouchers.

Name: Matthew Karsten

Comment: As a first year teacher, this school voucher bill is very disheartening. Iowa public schools are already doing everything they can with their limited budgets and low staff numbers. This bill will not fix those problems. What Iowa needs is more funding for public education to allow schools to provide the resources to ensure a fair and quality education for ALL students. I encourage each of you to work in a public school for one day. I imagine you will learn a lot about education. Public funding should go towards public education, not to private organizations who have the ability to discriminate against students. I highly encourage you to vote no on this bill for the sake of the children. Thanks, Matthew Karsten 3rd Grade Teacher

Name: Paul McLaughlin

Comment: Sending public money for private schools is likely unconstitutional. Hopefully they will teach core curriculum courses... but it is the "electives" where I don't my tax dollars spent on some zealous/wacky, narrowminded, unamerican unsound school systems whose goals are not compatible with the general good of society.

Name: Janice Arthur

Comment: I am writing in strong opposition to SSB 1022. I am a 20year veteran public school teacher. I currently teach reading intervention in a large suburban district in the Des Moines area. With the change to open enrollment legislation during the last legislative session, our public school is seeing a rapid increase in open enrollments and new enrollments into our schools. Many of these students come to us with gaps in their foundational reading and math skills. It takes resources, both human and financial, to meet these students needs and provide them with the education that they that every child deserve. This bill will redirect precious financial resources away from my school to private schools that are under no obligation to accept students who need intensified support in academics. We all want a state where citizens are literate, engaged, and wellprepared to contribute to our society. Please dont remove the best pathway in America to that reality: a free, quality public education.

Name: Paula Thome

Comment: I am strongly opposed to any form of vouchers. The fact that the last two years vouchers bills have been defeated shoujld tell you something. The fact that they are trying to sell the idea with a very expensive ad campaign should make you pause and question is this right for Iowa. If you represent a rural school district I fail to understand how you can possibly support vouchers. Iowa once took pride in being a state that valued education. Continuing down this path of introducing legislation that will harm students in Iowa is just wrong.

Name: J.P. Claussen

Comment: Our public schools are in need of more support not less. Private schools are not held to the same standards. They do not have to serve students with disabilities, for example. These entitled students require additional resources in order to educate them. This voucher program does not give an honest choice to parents of students with disabilities, as the cost of educating these students can be far higher than what is allocated by the State and Federal government.

Name: Elizabeth Brauer

Comment: What are we missing? Who stands to benefit from private schools? Are politicians receiving donations from charter school corporations? Will teachers benefit? Typically private schools pay less than public schools and dont have as good benefits. Is the goal to bust the teachers union? Why would teachers lives be made harder? Does someone want to drive them all from the profession? Will children benefit? Will private schools accept and be able to meet the needs of special needs students, those with IEPs or English Language Learners? Where is the transparency about the real reasons behind this push? Why isnt this energy being spent on improving the public

schools and bringing Iowa back to first in the nation public education?

Name: Heather Mouchka

Comment: Public dollars for public schools. By pulling money from public education to private education you are further stretching an already strapped system. The public schools in the state have been underfunded for years which has created larger class sizes, less technology, and is forcing more educators to leave the state/profession because of the lack of support. Not to mention the wide variety of students who are currently supported in a public school that would be turned away if they were to try and enroll at a private school because our current system doesn't hold our private schools to the same standards as our public schools. Instead of continuing to underfund our public education system maybe we should be using this funding to create the best learning environments for ALL kids, not just a select few. Please fully fund public schools.

Name: Jane Cranston

Comment: I am against the Voucher bill. It will undermine quality education to an extreme degree. As a retired teacher, university instructor, supervisor, and homeschool supervisor, I am familiar with the Iowa education system. Public schools are required to do things that private schools are not. For example: accept all students including those with disabilities, offer a wide variety of classes, activities, and sports, provide transportation to and from school, require licensed teachers and background checks for employees, administer standardized tests, share test results with the public, report gaps or disproportionate results, be governed by publicly elected school boards, require meetings to be open to the public, comply with public records requirements, have a budget that is approved through a public hearing. These stipulations work to ensure quality education for all students. Money used for the vouchers takes away from money for public schools. This bill will only reinforce the privilege of the rich. It will disempower children who are differently abled or are from diverse backgrounds. The Voucher bill is a wolf in sheep's clothing that will destroy quality education in Iowa. Our children and families will pay dearly for this terrible mistake. Vote against vouchers!

Name: Steve and Brannan

Comment: Do not take any funds away from the public schools. They already have a hard time living within their budget. If you want to join the country club, fine. If you want to live in a private community, fine. pay the bill. don't ask for the public to pay your dues. Public dollars belong in Public schools. Leave it alone. Steve Brannan

Name: Pamela Moore

Comment: Strong public education is a cornerstone of rural communities, keeping young adults with school age children in Iowa, instead of moving out of state, and critical to Iowa's future. I grew up in a consolidated school district. I am very worried about what will happen to our rural public schools if they are not well supported. It is such a slippery slope to start down a path of diverting funds to private schools. If further consolidations are needed due to students going to private schools, the geographic sizes of schools lead to longer bus rides and higher costs. Parents should pay tuition themselves or via their churches if schools are affiliated with churches. There needs to remain separation between church and state, or all of us lose our freedom to practice our own religion. Parents can take the lead in educating their children about religion and personal values. Schools encourage development of critical thinking and no one should be worried about that being a risk, unless they in their heart, recognize their values are questionable. Please vote no on private school vouchers. Please support public education and communicate respect for, and seek to compensate public teachers fairly.

Name: Brenda Gannon

Comment: As a taxpayer from a rural area of Iowa I am strongly opposed to using public tax dollars to fund private schools when the entity receiving funds is not accountable to

the same standards and regulations as our public schools. This plan does not serve a public purpose. It funnels public dollars to private organizations with little to no transparency requirements and simply subsidizes tuition for families already sending their children to private schools. The original rationale for the vouchers was to help low income families pay for a private school education. With the income requirement being removed, this no longer seems to be the purpose. So one has to ask, what is the real intent of the bill?!

Name: Joan Donovan

Comment: Public funds are for public schools. Public schools are already underfunded. Taking more from them to give to private schools will not create more competition and make schools better, it will decrease opportunities for students, increase class sizes and ruin the public school system. If you really want to help students fund the public schools appropriately.

Name: Stacy Young

Comment: Please vote no on school vouchers. It will slowly decimate rural school's ability to attract any teachers. Likewise, urban school will have to reduce offerings like AP courses, foreign language, any special interests like psychology, business or the arts. We deserve the community benefits and transparency that come with public education

Name: Melissa Grubb

Comment: Public TAXPAYER funds belong to the PUBLIC! Not private or parochial institutions that may not be accredited by a legitimate accreditation process. Also please tell me how my child would be transported to a PRIVATE school that does NOT exist in my community??!?! Ill politely stand by to hear the plan for this and other logistical issues. Put the money into PUBLIC schools as the responsibility of the formerly Great State of Iowa is to ensure a BASIC education for its populace. No one demands a PRIVATE education. That is flat out optional and PRIVATE institutions have the wherewithal and FUNDRAISING divisions to aid their particular clientele.

Name: Vicki Sehgal

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill. Im the last of my family to live in iowa. My parents and siblings have all moved away to states that have more to offer. I stayed with my family so my kids could attend some of the best schools in the nation. I pay taxes so all children in the state of iowa can receive free, quality public education. Not just mine. I want to live in a well educated society. I want my children to know all children in the state of iowa matter and deserve to be educated.

Name: Katharina Albrecht

Comment: Please stop trying to pass this voucher bill. Funneling taxpayer money to private schools is not conducive to strong public schools. Please listen to the citizens of Iowa. We want legislators to invest in our public schools. Stop pandering to private entities. Losing funds through vouchers will cause loss of teachers, paraeducators, and programs.

Name: Eileen Beran

Comment: As a Kalona taxpayer, Im against the school voucher proposal to provide private schools with (more) public funds. Nonpublic schools already receive public funding for transportation, textbooks, home school assistance, and other services. Our local schools have an excellent reputation but are pressed financially, and further draining of their funding will only make the situation more difficult. Public funds belong in public schools, not in private ones, and especially not to line the pockets of those who are wealthy and can well afford tuition. Keep our rural schools healthy and vibrantsay No to school vouchers.

Name: Lisa Williams

Comment: I stand in opposition to vouchers. Vouchers primarily benefit the wealthiest among us and in other jurisdictions nearly 90% of vouchers are used by parents with children already enrolled in private schools. They don't create opportunities. They are a bonus for the wealthy. The governor's proposal eliminates any income restrictions after three years which is more proof that this isn't about opportunities but about helping the most wealthy Iowans who can already afford private school tuition. Vouchers don't offer all parents choice private schools can pick and choose who they accept and they are not required to serve students with IEPs. Moreover, almost 75% of public schools are in rural areas with little to no access to private schools. Most families will be excluded from the choice of participating in a voucher program. Private schools also are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools. Locally elected citizen volunteers oversee our public schools and represent the community's voice. Private schools are governed by self-appointed boards of trustees with no public oversight over how public money would be spent. Public dollars need to go to public education.

Name: Kevin Lauridsen

Comment: Public money belongs in public education. Parents have choice its called open enrollment.

Name: Susan Bowland

Comment: Strongly object to using tax money for private and religious schools. Work on improving public education.

Name: Shana Johnson

Comment: As a parent of 3 school age children and an educator for 20 years, I am writing to plead with you to not allow public school funding to be diverted to private school education. Funneling money to private schools will gut our already strained public school system. Diverting our tax dollars to fund private education will erode our public schools and hurt rural schools and communities the hardest. Our tax dollars are for public interest not private entities. Rural schools are the life blood of those communities and provide jobs for many occupations besides teaching. Cooks, janitors, secretaries, physical plant employees. The economic effect will be Teacher turnover is already at the highest its ever been. Diverting these funds will lead to schools having to hire less qualified teachers. FAPE (Free and appropriate public education) is foundational to our society. Private schools do not have to accommodate for special needs students and can refuse their admittance. Vote NO!

Name: Donna MacNeir

Comment: I'm a retiree on IPERS and SS. I feel I deserve to choose where my tax contribution go. And I chose Ankeny PS. I really don't appreciate the state telling me where my tax dollars should go, under the governor's plan and her out of state followers. Shame Shame shame. My dollars, my choice. Not the governor.

Name: Cecilia Thomas

Comment: I strongly oppose school vouchers. I live in a rural district. Our school is already made up of 4 small towns. There are school districts in our area that have five, six or seven small towns that make up a district. Directing resources away from Iowa public schools will only hurt kids and the small communities. Please don't do this. I love my school.

Name: Rebecca Entel

Comment: The voucher bill would be a disaster for our entire state. It will defund our already struggling schools that the state government has a duty to support and sustain. It will lead to a segregated educational system, as private schools can reject any

students who need accommodations. It will harm rural Iowans who have no private schools nearby sucking money from their communities with no benefit to them. It would spend public money with NO accountability from the receiving institutions. Any elected official (and party) that claims to be concerned about government spending should be firmly against a bill that will spend taxpayer money with no accountability to the taxpayers whatsoever. Our state government needs to examine how they've weakened our once toptier public school system, not weaken it further. Vote NO on the voucher bill. I don't have children in the schools nor do I work in the public school system. But I know that strong public schools matter to every single citizen of a city and state and to the future. Please oppose voucher legislation.

Name: Chelsea Sims

Comment: Iowans do not want or need this plan. It is a clear attempt to defund and dismantle public schools to enrich private corporations. We know that private schools don't have to follow the same rules and regulations as public schools, and therefore should not be receiving public funds. This plan will destroy rural schools and further erode Iowa's position as a well educated state. You can pretend it isn't a voucher scheme. We know it is. Tell your buddies at ALEC, the Koch bros, and Corey DeAngelis to mind their business and leave Iowans out of it. We like our public schools and want them to succeed... which requires funding you want to give away.

Name: Renee Bowman

Comment: As a public educator for over 30 years in Iowa, public schools educate everyone and we do so under state regulations due to the fact we are state funded. Public schools do not have to follow the same regulations, so they should not be receiving state funding. I feel that for years, politicians have been working to make it impossible for public schools to succeed. Public school funding has not kept pace with inflation and our schools are severely underfunded. This results in understaffing, cutting programs and not paying teachers and support staff fair wages. More guidelines are added all the time without funding or support needed. A good example was the planning to return to learning after COVID shutdown. Schools scrambled like never before to plan how to resume teaching only to be told at the last minute, not good enough, change again! Political attacks on teachers, Sinister Teachers, has resulted in fewer people going into our teacher programs, especially quality applicants. We have a shortage of teachers and no substitutes, so the bar has been lowered for people to teach in the classroom. Now, open enrollment law has changed from a March 1 deadline to anytime, making it very difficult for schools to budget. I feel bad policies such as these is making it difficult for public schools to succeed and therefore politicians can say, See, public schools dont work. I see public schools work every day as I work tirelessly my students and the students of my school. They deserve an education and Iowa tax dollars should support them, not those who choose to go elsewhere and not have any responsibility to taxpayers.

Name: Leslie Schwalm

Comment: As a retired university professor, I know personally from the students I have worked with the negative consequences of our underfunded public schools. We need fully funded PUBLIC schools to serve all Iowans. Public money should not be funneled away from public needs.

Name: Lisa Lode

Comment: As a teacher having worked in both public and private school, I plead with our law makers to vote no for the School Choice/Voucher bill. I strongly believe that public tax money needs to go to public schools. I know money given to schools over the past couple of years seems to have increased, but the money hasn't kept up with inflation, even before the last year of sky high prices. When the cost of everything goes up and the money received from the state doesn't cover the higher costs, public school districts have to make difficult cuts. It usually means larger class sizes, low (if any) certified/classified staff raises, and reductions of programs such as art programs

and library programs. Substituting less qualified individuals to teach programs will only hurt the students and teachers in the long run. Below is some information I received from a member of the legislature last year. Even as an educator who follows politics closely, I did not know all of this. I found it very interesting. "Until 2002, Iowa provided no funds for private schools. Today, taxpayers provide around \$73 million for private school students. We pay for textbooks and transportation. Through the state Area Education Agencies, taxpayers provide private schools with funds and personnel for special education, psychology, social work, hearing and vision assessment, and occupational and physical therapists. AEAs also use taxpayer dollars to provide private schools with consultation on academics, behavioral issues, professional development, talented and gifted education, and media services. Private nonprofit and religious schools pay no property tax on their facilities or sales tax on classroom and administration supply purchases. The state gives a 65% tax credit for individual, corporate, and estate contributions to a School Tuition Organization (STO), the highest tax credit in Iowa law. Federal and state taxpayer dollars cover the cost of free and reduced lunches at private schools. These are significant taxpayer contributions to private schools that help reduce the tuition cost of attending the schools. Public schools are funded by taxpayers and are required to provide a free and appropriate education for all students regardless of ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, state test proficiency, behavioral problems, physical and mental health issues, etc. They are held accountable for their funds, student proficiencies and measurable growth. Private schools provide great education but are not required to provide education to children with special or difficult needs. They can pick and choose the demographics and capabilities of the children they admit. The education they provide is often based on their religion. And, for the charter schools created by the legislature last year, there is no elected body with oversight on their use of tax dollars. There are 485,630 students enrolled in Iowa public schools and 33,597 students enrolled in Iowa nonpublic schools. Des Moines Public Schools alone serve over 32,000 students. The estimated \$73 million taxpayer investment in private schools at this time is what we can afford and is a more than fair contribution to nonpublic private education. from Marti Anderson)

Name: Renee Bowman

Comment: Error in previous post. Private schools do not have to follow the rules as public schools.

Name: Mary Panther

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools NOT private schools. Separation of church and state! My parents sent us to Catholic schools by choice and expected to pay and did pay. Vote NO on vouchers!

Name: Krista Becker

Comment: FULLY FUND our public schools. That is what Iowans want. We love our local schools, the sense of community they provide, and want nothing more than to see our public schools thrive. Our public schools educate everyone in our community and hold all students to the same high achieving standards. We cannot continue to educate our community without proper funds! Private schools do not have the same accountability, standards, or have to provide the same level of transparency that public schools do. If a family chooses to attend a private school, it should not be with public money. When our public schools succeed, our community succeeds.

Name: Jane Harney

Comment: My husband and I are the parents of two grown daughters. Our oldest just graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Ethics & Public Policy, and our youngest is currently a student at Kirkwood Community College studying Business Administration. Both of our girls attended diverse, urban public schools and benefited greatly from their experience. I am a firm believer that strong, quality

public schools are vital to the health and vibrancy of a community, as well as our state. The moment Iowa legislators begin considering measures that shortchange our public school systems, is the moment in which our communities begin to suffer. If decision makers were to take the time to look back through the past 70+ years and really examine the role quality public schools have played in building strong communities, it would be time well spent. I encourage Republicans to take a moment and step back from the controversy. There's an opportunity to take a different approach and seize the opportunity to learn from the past. The successes public schools experienced in prior decades can be replicated, but it requires energy and resources. Iowa was once a state that placed a high priority on allocating those resources. We reigned as one of the top states in the nation when it came to the quality of our public schools. If Republican legislators took the time to talk to more Iowans (regardless of their party affiliation), they would discover that the majority of our state's residents believe public schools should be fully funded, and most actually want to see increased funding of public schools. If Republicans fear those kinds of conversations, then that is a symptom of a larger problem. Frankly, I believe that only good can come from opening the lines of communication. I hope that is still achievable.

Name: Pamela Keller

Comment: When I moved to the state nearly 30 years ago, the quality of the education system was part of the calculation that went into determining that move. Since that time I have seen over the past 12 years I have seen a steady decrease in the importance that the legislators place on education and the funding for schools. This even extends into the state university system. I am AGAINST any program that allows for monies that the taxpayers have a right to expect that will be returned to their schools being spent for PRIVATE SCHOOL enrollment. I do not care what it is called, it is still a voucher program. The Governor can give it a new name, the Legislators can give it a new name, it is only putting lipstick on a pig and trying to pass it off as Donna Reed, it is still a pig. The smaller districts in the rural parts of the state that already are suffering by being underfunded by the state legislature will be the losers again. Only one of my three children who enjoyed good schools 30 years ago have returned to the state with their families. They live in neighboring states, their children receive excellent educations, and they are able to practice their civil rights. The one child who lives here is actively looking to move elsewhere and if the educational system in Iowa is allowed to deteriorate by passage of an UNWANTED SCHOOL VOUCHER program, I will be the first to help her pack the moving van. NO, NO, NO to the SSB 1022.

Name: Joanna Sinnwell

Comment: Using public funds for private schools benefits upper income white children ONLY. What this bill does is create a segregated, high performing/low performing system from which it will take years to recover. Iowa is already losing in education due to all the recent budget cuts and tax cuts.

Name: Lois DeWaard

Comment: Public dollars for public schools only. If private schools are going to receive public tax dollars, then they should meet the exact same standards as public schools.

Name: Rich Singer

Comment: Does the state have so much money that it can give vouchers to church schools rather than improving Iowa public schools. If so give me the tax cut and I will support local religious organizations that agree with my beliefs. This is an awful idea. Parents chose to send their children to private schools they should pay for it.

Name: Rich Singer

Comment: Does the state have so much money that it can give vouchers to church schools rather than improving Iowa public schools. If so give me the tax cut and I will support local

religious organizations that agree with my beliefs. This is an awful idea. Parents chose to send their children to private schools they should pay for it.

Name: Kristyn Arnold

Comment: Public schools are legally required to serve all children. Private schools are not and can turn students away based on anything they decide is too complicated. For this reason funds coming through a legal path should only go to schools legally bound to accept all children. I am against vouchers taking funds away from public schools.

Name: Catelin Drey

Comment: The lack of transparency and accountability about what will happen to taxpayer dollars when funneled into private schools should irk all those that espouse principals of fiscal responsibility. Please do not support vouchers.

Name: Catherine Gerlach

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools. Public schools are the very foundation of our society and are now a safety net and educate the majority of our community. Without fully funding our schools, we continue to set them up for failure. Allowing vouchers after the legislature has already underfunded schools for years will cause even further degradation of our public education system.

Name: Jason Lang

Comment: It is painfully obvious that the citizens of the state of Iowa do not want their public dollars going to private schools. Our state has a great history of public education and this attempt to subvert it is shameful at best and criminal at worst. It is clear and obvious that the poor students in our state will never be able to seek out and enroll in a private school. Many of these students are in our rural counties where they have zero access to a private school. The cost of private school in the larger cities far exceeds the stipend that the state wants to offer. Will poor families be able to afford the difference between the tuition cost and the stipend as well as the cost of transporting their children to and from school? Unless every person in favor of this legislation can clearly spell out where each and every child will be able to go to a private school in their district or can prove that each and every child will even be eligible (think special and behavioral needs) to a private school in their district, this is complete folly. Will you all be ready to stand accountable for the number of rural districts that stand to close? Is that the legacy you want to leave in your district? Are you really gaining so much personally that your longterm legacy will be, the person that caused the greatest number of district closings since the 1950s? Walk away from this awful bill with your dignity and your love and pride in the state of Iowa intact. Thank you.

Name: Kathryn Twist

Comment: Year after year of underfunding education and entertaining legislation that degrades the teaching profession is what has caused the teacher shortage, the pandemic just shined a light on what has been a problem for years. And yet Iowa public schools continue to outperform States with voucher programs. Vouchers will not attract young people to the profession, nor retain the teachers we have. We should be seeing legislation that attracts and retains teachers with competitive salaries, student loan forgiveness, mortgage breaks, etc. Something, anything, that sends the message that teachers are valued and that our state cares about the education of ALL its children.

Name: Rebecca Fitzgerald

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools. Parents in Iowa already have school choice. They can open enroll (as I have chosen for my children), pay for a private school, or homeschool. Public schools educate all students regardless of needs and meet them where they are. I believe in our public schools, and I have used my school choice to send my children to public schools in Waukee. I have been so inspired by our public

school teachers, I decided to go back to school to become one. I am student teaching right now in a public school, and I will work for a public school in the fall.

Name: Jessica Dagel

Comment: I am yet another person opposed to school vouchers. Dress it up and call it. Whatever you want. It is still a voucher program that is funneling public dollars into the private sector, which is illegal. Private schools do not have to take kids with disabilities, they do not have to take kids who are gay or transgendered. There is no financial oversight, and many of the teachers are not even certified. Public dollars need to stay with public schools. Islands have had enough of this republican hootenanny.

Name: Julie Timm

Comment: I am opposed to diverting funding away from our public school system. Over the past several years the State has elected to raise school funding by meager amounts. Over that same time Iowas rank has dropped in comparison to other states. I strongly believe this decline will continue unless we put more money towards our public schools. This deliberate underfunding is even being done in years when the governor touts huge budget surpluses. This screams of poor management and a severe lack of concern with the overall quality of life in the state which starts with a highly educated population. This can only happen if we stop the idea of diverting additional funds away from public schools and ensure they are properly funded.

Name: Joel Woehler

Comment: I do not support the proposed voucher. Iowa Public Schools were known to be one of the best in the nation. I chose to enroll my children in a public school because I believe in the community and the diverse learning environment. I volunteer at the school and know how much it will hurt public schools if more funding is taken away.

Name: Elisa Meeks

Comment: Public schools are already grossly underfunded. Public funds should not be used to fund private school choice. We should be building up Iowas public schools with better funding.

Name: Christy Jaworski

Comment: I am writing in opposition to the voucher bill. Public money should be used for public education. Dont destroy Iowa schools by diverting our tax money to private schools not help to the same accountability as our public schools.

Name: Leslie Carpenter

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill. Public funds are for public education. Period.

Name: Devon McClurken

Comment: I moved back to Iowa. I moved BACK to Iowa from Colorado, where I had gone to undergrad and graduate school. I moved back to Iowa to start a family. I moved back to have my child get the education I received growing up in Iowa. I moved back because when I was going through school in Iowa it was top in the nation. I moved back because I wanted that for my child. I moved back and now I see 20 years later, it is not the same. I moved back and I see that public education which is what our state quarter prided itself on, is no longer funded and valued by our state government. I moved back and see that governor and legislature want to defund it more and provide public money for private institutions, private institutions that would have no recourse for denying to educate my child because he has two moms. I moved back to Iowa and am dismayed at what is going on. I moved back and wished I had stayed. I moved back but know now many high school seniors will make the decision to go to school out of state, and many of them will not move back.

Name: Jewel Proctor

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools!

Name: Shannon Boyd

Comment: Religious based private schools are not required to provide special education services. They do not have teachers trained to provide specialized teaching methods to those with disabilities. Currently, some private schools send their students to PUBLIC schools for part of the day to get special education services. Allowing students with resources to leave the public schools with a financial incentive only leaves the rest behind. You cannot leave special education students, who have no other equivalent option, behind as everyone else is incentivized away. What happens to successful private schools when they are bombarded with students with different learning needs that they don't have the resources to deal with? And not only does this apply to students with disabilities (including learning disabilities AND physical disabilities), but also to students with English as a second language. Private schools are NOT required by law to provide any of these specialized services.

Name: Theresa Gideon

Comment: I very much disagree with using public funds to subsidized private or charter school education. Cutting funding from public schools hurts everyone.

Name: Jackie Cordon

Comment: We already have school choice in Iowa with open enrollment and it works for many. Even those who want their kids to school at home can open enroll in one of the districts that provides distance learning. Giving our public tax dollars to private entities that have no oversight is only going to hurt our whole education package. Our public schools are overseen by people we elect and we can kick them out of office if we dont like the job theyre doing. Theres no such public involvement once our tax dollars go to a private school. I homeschooled my kids because of our jobs and traveling but never did expect public tax dollars to pay for our private choices. We have public schools we all contribute to in order to have educated citizens who then will give back through paying taxes themselves. Theyll settle close by and buy homes and spend their money in our communities. But not if we gut our schools. Rural schools will be hurt the most and with that rural communities.

Name: Emily Mayfield

Comment: NO to vouchers in Iowa! Sufficient school choice already exists in Iowa. This entire idea is unnecessary and a waste of time and energy in the legislature. Almost 2/3 of our counties have either zero or extremely limited private school options. Voucher money will be disproportionately distributed away from our rural communities and students. Real issues exist in our public school system due to chronic underfunding. The thought of taking more money away from our kids is appalling. Our excellent schools used to be a significant selling point for young professionals to return to or stay in Iowa to raise their families. Vouchers are bad for our kids and bad for our economy. Please refocus your energy on solving actual issues facing Iowans!

Name: Kelly Brummond

Comment: 1. PUBLIC DOLLARS FOR PUBLIC USE I support providing the flexibility to expand educational opportunities and choices for students and families. The educational options must remain under the sole authority of locally elected school boards charged with representing community interests and accountability. I oppose the use of additional taxpayer funds for the creation of vouchers or educational savings accounts or an increase in tax credits or deductions directed toward nonpublic schools. 2. STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH I support efforts to establish comprehensive community mental health systems. These systems will be designed to offer both preventative and treatment services and comprehensive mental health

programs that include inschool access for students to mental health professionals and provisions for reimbursement by Medicaid and private insurers.I also support additional ongoing teacher, administrator, and support staff training to improve the awareness and understanding of child emotional and mental health needs.It is also the case that additional funding will be necessary to bring this priority into full form. We are supportive of funding models that expand dollars to further bolster the mental health system.3. SUPPLEMENTAL STATE AIDSetting Supplemental State Aid (SSA) within the statutory requirements allows districts to make sound financial decisions. I support setting SSA:For FY 2023, within the first 30 days of the Governors budget announcement;For FY 2024 and future budget years, at least 14 months prior to the certification of the schools district budgets; andAt a rate that sufficiently supports local districts efforts to plan, create and sustain worldclass schools.I also support a formuladriven method, which includes indicators of economic growth, for establishing the SSA growth rate if it is not set within the statutory requirements.4. LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITYThe solution to problems, as well as the advancement of opportunities, are likely to be the most effective at the level closest to the problem or opportunity. This belief also applies to the important work of local school boards. I believe that local decisionmaking, coupled with local accountability, is the most appropriate environment for nurturing highquality school systems.

Name: Michelle Lange

Comment: Public schools are the foundation for the future success of our state. They are already significantly underfunded and this will make it worse. This bill will hurt the vast majority of the children in our state and the negative impact will be felt for years to come. Its a huge mistake.

Name: Mary Kenyon

Comment: Education funding in our state has not kept pace with inflation for many years, leading to shortfalls as school districts attempt to keep up with costs rising faster than their state allocation. Now the Governor proposes to redirect a portion of that state funding to private schools. How can anyone think this is economically feasible? We can not afford to fund two separate systems of education. Public school is for everyone and is funded by the state because the state has an interest in an educated populace. The state has zero interest in anyone learning or maintaining any specific faith system. Therefore, there is no reason to direct state funds to private schools, most of which in Iowa are faithbased.

Name: Laura Heithoff

Comment: In the summer of 2005, after my husband completed his residency in Indiana, we moved with our new son back to Iowa for the public schools. We wanted our children to go to school with people from all backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities. Iowa public schooling was what helped us grow up to be well rounded and compassionate people who work for and with people: my husband is a family practice doctor and I am a public school teacher. As a Christian, I feel that I am the hands and feet of Jesus when I am in my classroom and working with my students of all abilities, faiths, beliefs, and backgrounds. I do not need to lead prayer in my classroom to be a Christian, but that doesn't mean I'm not constantly praying for guidance or for my students. We have two sons and both are looking at getting out of the state we once loved because of the bills that keep getting introduced which are not in the best interest of Iowans. To be honest, we are looking at leaving the state because we are tired of the fight, no matter how much we love this state we grew up in. The politicization of Covid, the defunding of public schools, the lack of mental health resources, and being called names while trying to serve others has been demoralizing, to say the least. And now fast tracking this outofstateidea voucher program to subsidize private education for those who already have choice is unconscionable. Our students and patients are struggling with poverty, hunger, and mental health. And our state is focused on subsidizing those who already can afford

to pay for their children to be indoctrinated by religious education at schools without the public oversight and accountability that public schools ensure. What will happen to students with IEPs? We already have a special education professional shortage in this state. Where will the private schools get these special education teachers that their students need? Please do what is right for Iowa and not what has already been proven to be a mistake in other states.

Name: Peter Hansen

Comment: Today's paper announced that Governor Reynolds is proposing a 2.5% state budget increase for K12 public schools, public universities and community colleges. Yet not long ago Governor Reynolds was critical of the administration in Washington for an 8% rate of inflation. Comparing these two numbers, how can our public schools possibly make ends meet? I fear our teachers' salaries will simply not keep up with inflation. I am opposed to defunding our public school teachers! On the other hand Governor Reynolds had no difficulty finding \$107 million to assist the state's private K12 schools. I am opposed to funding private schools with public money.

Name: Ed Flaherty

Comment: This proposal is destructive, insane, and unjust, and most of its supporters know that. Take the stand for the public good!

Name: Emily Silliman

Comment: I am about halfway through reading SSB 1022. It would be a mistake to rush passage of such a huge change in Iowa's education system. This needs to be studied thoroughly, especially with reference to jurisdictions around the country where a voucher system has been tried. Most voucher experiments have been discontinued, because all they did was defund the public schools to benefit unregulated schools and sketchy quasieducational programs. This proposed law specifically says that the state should not hold nonpublic institutions to any standards, other than that students must take mandated standardized tests. When schools with no standards are funded with my taxpayer money, I get very worried. Worried about forprofit hucksters, worried about cults who might run schools, and very, very worried about the children upon whom this experiment is being conducted. The public schools are left with significantly less money to run their programs, and they are the only schools required to do their very best to educate all students. Put this bad idea on hold for a year or two, or vote it down altogether.

Name: Brock Lehman

Comment: The way the proposed educational subsidy plan by the governor is a travesty. The republicans call it choice but the reality is if the private school deems someone as different they can deny entrance. If they are a poor student, they can be removed. If they have learning disorders, they can be denied. If they dont speak English or are lgbtqor get caught drinking or using drugs. All expelled and where do they go the public school because the public school is like the Statue of Liberty we take every kid no matter the circumstance. Thats not competition that is being fed state dollars to promote an educational segregation. This is nothing more than giving state dollars to fund systematic arrogance and in the case of Christian schools is simply funding religious hypocrisy. If you want to call it competition then everyone plays by the same set of rules. If private schools want state dollars then they need to be accountable to all the rules public schools follow including a publicly elected school board.

Name: Lori Lyon

Comment: Iowans have had record low percentages of SSA increase for over a decade. Iowans already have school choice a choice parents can make if they so choose. In making that choice, private schools can discriminate in the selection of students, expel them at will due to disability, race, mental health, or sexual orientation. They also dont

report state tests or teach common core standards. We all enjoy healthy competition, but only when the rules are the same for both teams. If you dont want to follow the rules, vouchers arent for us. Iowa tax payers all know a scam when they see it. Iowa taxpayers, students, and even economic development will all suffer. Do what an overwhelming percentage of Iowans want. Adequately fund our public schools.

Name: Sarah Wilson

Comment: I am a mother of 3 children in a suburban Iowa school, of which my husband and I are both alums of the same district. While the district has grown and changed tremendously since we were students, we continue to believe in the strength of the district. 12 years ago, we returned to Iowa after leaving the state after college graduation. One of the big reasons we returned to Iowa was because of the public schools. We have something special here and Im afraid the voucher bill will take away this special system we have loved. Please vote no to vouchers in Iowa. Many Iowa towns are small but mighty because of their public schools. Funding for schools that are not public takes away funding from the public good of education and threatens the wellbeing of those communities and families. We also know that charter schools do not perform as well as public schools, lack transparency, and can discriminate against learners and applicants. I ask that instead of passing this bill, please turn your focus back to the public good of education. Your public schools need you to keep our children learning and our communities thriving. We should really take the time to understand how to improve school performance and to refocus our state's dollars on our learners. Our teachers, students and our communities deserve this support, and I hope our state leaders will reflect on how critical this is for the success of all our learners.

Name: Sandy Wilson

Comment: Citizen Engagement declares IN FAVOR of SSB 1022.

Name: John Kenyon

Comment: I urge legislators to oppose this bill. Public dollars should be used for public schools. Anyone is free to send their child to a private school, and those who see value in these institutions are free to support them. But you cannot choose whether or not to support public schools. They are a public asset, a public good. We need to educate our children, and taking funding away from public schools will make them worse, not better. If the goal is to improve education, you do that by providing more resources, not fewer. Other points related to the lack of transparency and accountability have surely been made more eloquently elsewhere, but these are real concerns as well. Lastly, at a time when we have a massive surplus, we should be investing more in public education, not thinking about tax cuts and othe ways to further decimate our already crumbling public sector and infrastructure.

Name: Patrick O'Donnell

Comment: This bill is not supported by a majority of Iowans. Jim Reynolds is not working for Iowans as this bill is part of the national republican party plan to destroy public education. There are mainly two groups that are behind this push, the American legislative exchange council better known as ALEC and the Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation. Both organizations are pushing for the delegitimization of public. If you notice, the republican controlled states are all proposing, bills, including this one, that are very similar, if not exactly alike. ALEC provides boiler plate policy and bills and talking points to republican state legislators. This is not about Iowa. Its not about our kids. Its about an agenda I guess public education.

Name: Barb Nessa

Comment: I am a mother and grandmother of children educated or being educated in Iowa public schools. No public dollars for private schools. Lets spend our money to fully fund all public schools in Iowa that serve over 90% of Iowa children. We need strong

neighborhood and community schools more than ever. Make Iowa a leader in public education once again. No to vouchers/scholarships.

Name: Becky Ross

Comment: There is a reason we have "public schools", it's to guarantee that everyone gets a good education. My husband was a teacher and then a principal, now retired. We know many teachers and the lack of funding for public schools makes their work lives miserable. If we want to improve on our education system in Iowa, we should be fund them as if it really matters. By giving funds to private schools we are not giving our public schools a chance to compete.

Name: Janice Burns

Comment: I am concerned about your lack of funding for public schools which are charged with serving all students. As a former special education teacher, I had several students who were directed to leave private schools because they could not serve them. Please consider increasing funding for public schools to 5 percent.

Name: Amy Alton-Stonebrook

Comment: Private school "scholarships" should not be funded by public tax money. Private schools do not have to follow the same accountability that public schools have to follow. Many areas of Iowa do not have a private school nearby. Parents already have the choice to attend a different public school by open enrollment. We need to fully fund our public schools and support our teachers. I have a niece who is a native Iowan. She and her husband were teaching in southern California as that is where she received her Masters in Science education. They decided to return to the Midwest this past fall. They choose not to return to Iowa due to the treatment of public education by the Iowa legislature. I also have a bonus niece and her husband who were public education teachers in Iowa. They left Iowa in 2021 due to the current legislative culture. These four teachers are now working in Minnesota. Three have their Masters, one special education credentials, one gifted and talented credentials, and two STEM educators. More teachers will leave the state of Iowa if the state government continues on this current trend of underfunding public education and taking public money and giving it to private schools. I am against private school scholarships or vouchers.

Name: Roger Henderson

Comment: I am vehemently opposed to the establishment of statefunded scholarships (vouchers) for k12 education in Iowa. This choice voucher system will further stratify the socio economic divide in all communities. Public schools, if properly funded, level the playing field for all students. Private schools can choose not to accept students for any reason. This type of program is not for our state. Public schools are established for the common good of our communities, our state, and our country. I speak as a 38year public school educator who is now involved with a teacherprep program. Vote no for the proposed statefunded scholarship program.

Name: Katy Krapfl

Comment: I am a graduate of private schools in Iowa. My parents had the choice to send their kids to private school back in the 80s and parents today have the choice to send their kids to private schools. I am currently the mom of a 5th grader in the Iowa City public schools. That is also a choice my family made. Every dollar taken out of public schools is a dollar taken out of a shared community. Public schools educate ALL for the good of society. Public schools cannot continue to educate kids without investment. And that means keeping up with inflation. 2.5% is not giving schools what they need. It is undercutting their ability to educate our kids. And the state has been under investing in our state for at least ten years. Please do not take money from our community and our schools to prop up private entities.

Name: Donna Behrens

Comment: Experts are skeptical of the the EdChoice analysis finding vouchers have such an overwhelmingly positive effect. Christopher Lubienski and T. Jameson Brewer, a duo of education policy researchers from the University of Illinois, examined the EdChoice document in a 2016 article in the Peabody Journal of Education and wrote, misrepresentation of empirical findings by advocates appears to be a key element of their advocacy agenda. closer examination of the studies put forth by advocates suggests little consensus or consistency across the reported findings, their analysis said. In the last few years, a spate of studies have shown that voucher programs in Indiana, Louisiana, Ohio, and Washington D.C. hurt student achievement often causing moderate to large declines. While the early research was somewhat mixed it is striking how consistent these recent results are, said Joe Waddington, a University of Kentucky professor who has studied Indianas voucher program. Weve started to see persistent negative effects of receiving a voucher on student math achievement. In Louisiana, after two years in the program, a student who started at the 53rd percentile dropped to the 37th percentile in math. By and large, those negative effects persisted through year four, particularly in math and science. If you would like to experiment with a new concept of education, you could try fully funding public education and compare those results that are carefully monitored and included the widest variety of students so we have that research to compare the vouchers and truly see what works better.

Name: Barb Bewyer

Comment: I support parents being able to send their children to private schools. However, I do not support public funds being used for this. Private schools are not equally available to families throughout Iowa, whereas public education is, and with a standardized expectation level for all. Private schools can set their own acceptance criteria, as well as their own expectation standards. Do Iowans want our government to fund private programs without the same guidance and accountability? I do not believe the majority of Iowans do want that. Please VOTE NO to vouchers.

Name: Jen Kinder

Comment: I am a current special education teacher in a rural district in Iowa and parent of children that attend school in the same district. I have read your bill and it seems more of a handout to private and charter schools. You do not hold the same standards for those institutions as you do for public schools. You want to take money from the families that believe in accountability in schools. What you call choice I call hurting the students of Iowa. Please ask all parents what they want not your cherry picked few. Explain to parents iep and services can be denied, accountability and testing are not required, students can be denied or removed at the discretion of the school. Explain how you tie the hands of public schools to gladly give money to schools that can shut down mid year. Be honest and be transparent.

Name: Barb Nelson

Comment: Iowans believe in and support public schools. Our public schools need to be adequately funded. Giving public funds to private schools is wrong and will only take needed funds away from the pool of funds that should go to funding public schools. I attended a Catholic Elementary school which fed into a public school. My parents did not think they should receive tax funds to be used to send me to private school. It was their choice, so they paid for it with the help of our church.

Name: Patrick O'Donnell

Comment: Auto correct got me on the previous comment. Here is the edited version. This bill is not supported by a majority of Iowans. Kim Reynolds is not working for Iowans as this bill is part of the national republican partys plan to destroy public education. There are mainly two groups that are behind this push, the American Legislative Exchange Council, better known as ALEC, and the Congressional Prayer Caucus

Foundation. Both organizations are pushing for the delegitimization of public schools. If you notice, the Republican controlled states are all proposing bills, including this one, that are very similar, if not exactly alike. ALEC provides boiler plate policy, bills, and talking points to Rupublicsn state legislators. This is not about Iowa. Its not about our kids. It's about an agenda against public education.

Name: Becky Svatos

Comment: I am opposed to using public money for private schools. The funding the legislature has given to public schools has not kept up with inflation and necessary salary increases to attract and retain quality teachers. Further reducing funding for public schools will guarantee a continued decline in the quality of Iowas public schools. If parents want to send their children to private schools, they can ask those schools for tuition reductions or other assistance rather than expecting taxpayers to pay for their choice.

Name: Darla Vander Weil

Comment: Public tax dollars belong in public schools. Public schools must accept all students. Public schools must meet standards and are held accountable for their outcomes. The private schools the governor wants to support with our tax dollars can reject any student they choose. These private schools do not have to abide by state standards. There is no accountability. Public schools in Iowa have gone without sufficient funding for too long. Now, splitting said "funds" can do nothing but diminish already scarce resources. This bill must not be passed.

Name: Eric Ortner

Comment: As someone who was educated in Iowa, at both a Catholic grade school and a public middlehigh school I know the value of both private and public education. I also know that the Catholic school wasn't required to make full accommodations for fellow classmates with special needs like the public schools I attended later did. If we are going to give parents the school choice they all want, with financial backing from the state, then change Section 504 to match the public school requirements. A parent with special needs child shouldn't have to choose between a public school and a private school because God made their child differently.

Name: Meredith Ortega

Comment: I am strongly opposed to this bill. Public funds are for public education not private education just as public funds are for public roads not private roads and public funds are for public safety not a private safety... public money is for publicly funded and state regulated needs. Students with IEPs and special needs have no protection in this bill, we are leaving those with the most needs the most vulnerable if we allow this to happen. I do not agree with my tax dollars being given out to private entities that are not able to be utilized by all equally.

Name: Mark Powell

Comment: My wife and I have two beautiful girls who attend public schools. Our youngest daughter is on an IEP. Private schools are not required to serve children on IEPs and do not have the staff to serve students with special needs. By diverting funds away from our public schools to go to private schools that are not required to serve all students, voucher programs strip our public schools of the valuable resources that our most vulnerable students need.

Name: Wendy Liskey

Comment: I do not support this bill. Until the playing field is leveled between public and private schools, no additional taxpayer money should be diverted away from public schools. Either the restrictions/requirements for public schools need to be lessened to what is currently in place for private schools or those current restrictions/requirements need to be enforced for ALL private schools. Where is the private school accountability in

this bill? Publicly elected school boards provide public school district oversight (and it sounds like Senator Zaun would like to complicate that process with his new billsSF23). The same should be required of private schools if they begin receiving significantly larger amounts of taxpayer money. PLEASE do not pass this legislation without amendments that provide equity in accountability. Taxpayers deserve that accountability. Students, staff and administrators in our public schools deserve private school accountability.

Name: RICHARD SHERZAN

Comment: CommentIowa Public Schoolsdeserve 100% funding by all Iowans.All Iowa public school teachers deserve the highest pay in the U.S.; and all Iowa public school parents deserve the highest public funding for schoolsupport, in the U.S., in order to educate their children in Iowa public schools.As a lifelong Democrat, I support an "All Iowa Public School ParentSupport Voucher Program", for all parents of public school childrento help parents support their children in Iowa Public Schools.

Name: Jessica Anderson

Comment: Public money should be only for public schools. Private schools do not have the same requirements to educate ALL students that public schools do. Vouchers will HURT our public schoolsthe same public schools that BOTH parties use to hold sacred and have been a point of pride for all Iowans. Stop this voucher nonsense and fully fund our PUBLIC schools.

Name: John McWilliams

Comment: I dont understand how Iowa Republicans can say that the public school system is broken when they havent funded it in a humane way in 20 years.Step One Listen to what District Superintendents are saying.Step Two Understand the ramifications of pulling money out of public schools.Step Three Tell Governor Reynolds and the special interests who are behind this, NO!

Name: Sara Miller

Comment: Iowa's (formerly world class) public schools are being choked out by underfunding, disinformation, and greed on the part of those who stand to profit from privatizing. In the 9 years of singleparty governing we have seen Iowa's schools consistently, purposely underfunded. Now, the problem has grown to the point where those who made the poison are touting a cure in the form of vouchers. Vouchers will choke struggling rural communities (where the school is not only the education but also the main employer). Vouchers will stagnate our suburban schools, already "doing more with less." We don't need choice, we need the robust free education that this country was built on. We need the promise that all children will have access to well funded, cutting edge education regardless of economic status, ability, religion, race, or orientation. We need to say no to welfare for the wealthy. As a former private school parent, I can unequivocally say that it would be wrong to subsidize those isolated personal choices at the expense of the vast public interest we all have in a well educated electorate.

Name: Steve Gude

Comment: I am a product of a fine public school education in Iowa Falls, which overall prepared me well to go on to college. After getting my degrees from the University of Iowa, I was a public school speechlanguage pathologist for 37.5 school years, all but three here in Iowa. Then, after retiring in 2018, I did some subbing for the next three school years in the Des Moines Public Schools. So, I've had a lot of contact with Iowa public education in my life. Also during my work years, I served students in nonpublic schools, so this was a case where public dollars were already going to help kids in private schools.I fail to see how the proposed vouchers will make our public school system stronger, which is where public dollars should be spent. Specifically, I don't think that this proposal will help rural Iowa and smaller districts.

I urge legislators, especially Republicans, to think long and hard about what is at stake here and to vote against this legislation.

Name: Tiffany DeBow

Comment: I am a parent in the Cedar Rapids metro area & I do not want our tax dollars going to pay for private, forprofit schools that have no transparency or accountability who can pick & choose their students. Rural Iowa schools should not have to pay the price for urban "parent choice". There are many private school options here in my area, but the impact to my large, urban school district will not be as hard as the impact to small rural schools who couldn't handle the loss of even just a handful of students. If private schools are doing so well & you want them to be able to get tax dollars with no accountability, why not unshackle the public schools from their burden to "prove" their "success" with test scores? Lastly, if our public education is "failing" as Republican politicians say, then perhaps they can explain why they have let it fail. The governor office has been Republican for 11 years & that office appoints the director of the department of education & all 10 members of the Iowa State School Board. The legislature sets up funding & curriculum parameters. The House has been Republican controlled & able to block legislation for 12 years. Why would we trust their ability to "fix" this problem when they were the ones to create it?

Name: Lisa Kent

Comment: I strongly oppose the voucher program for private schools. Remember that you represent your constituents and not the governor.

Name: Kara Vorwald

Comment: Vote no on this bill. Im a parent of 3. My oldest has a 504 and needs accommodations. This bill will leave kids like him behind. There is concern about the lack of transparency with our tax payer dollars. How would our auditor make sure these funds are being spent? No Counseling services, nurses on staff. Kids will end up being left behind and rural schools will be damaged beyond repair. This is wrong for Iowa! We should be putting funding into our schools and kids not defunding it. We have choice as parents to homeschool, do private schools or public schools. We already have a choice. Public funds for public schools!

Name: Laura Hingtgen

Comment: I am shocked that we are even considering taking money away from public schools. I attended public school in a small town. There were no private schools, regardless of vouchers. Lets put our state money where the majority of children live. Rural communities! I received an excellent public school education when I was growing up. Just give them the funds they need! Thank you.

Name: Nathan Smith

Comment: Public money should go to public schools. Iowa public schools have been woefully underfunded for too long. Pulling out more funding will only create more problems and chaos.

Name: Beth Graves

Comment: Please don't pass this voucher legislation it only hurts public schools. Many private schools bus their students to public schools for additional help all the while that private school is getting the funding for that student and the public school gets nothing for supporting them.

Name: Mary Smith

Comment: My roommate from college teaches in Arizona public schools and has experienced first hand the damage vouchers have done to public schools.

Name: Janet Hingtgen

Comment: I oppose SSB 1022. If people choose to send their children to private schools, as did I, that choice should carry the responsibility of meeting that cost. Many schools provide assistance for those who cannot afford it. Regardless, our tax dollars should not be taken from public schools and provided to those who choose other options. Our public schools should not be denied adequate funding by taking our tax dollars and providing it to private schools. Many private schools provide a good education, but many do not. This whole idea is ridiculous.

Name: Stephanie Caffrey

Comment: This program is designed to defund public schools. Everyone is entitled to a free and public education. All this is going to do is pull money from already struggling schools. Our family sends our children to Catholic school, and we are against this. I'm happy that my tax dollars go to our local school. We want an educated populace. It makes the world better.

Name: Amanda Chrystal

Comment: I am writing in opposition to the voucher program. In addition to depriving public schools of desperately needed funds, vouchers would create a SECOND bureaucracy for school choice, since we have already established a mechanism for that in Iowa. Iowa School Tuition Organizations provide low income students (the criteria for which school vouchers specifically imitate) with scholarships to attend the private school of their choice. This program used \$20 million in tax money in 2022, and I would much rather see an expansion of that program, than a replacement program which sole differentiating characteristic is that it takes money away from the public school, which for the majority of us is the hub of our community. I shouldn't need to remind you that cutting money from public school means cutting teachers, cutting programs, and larger class sizes, all of which is not beneficial to the majority of our children. Keep public schools funded!

Name: Jessica Kite

Comment: In my 19th year of teaching at public schools, I am, once again, severely discouraged by our politicians gutting public education. Consistent cuts to budgets and refusing to increase budgets to even remotely coming close to inflation has meant a mass exodus of teachers, support staff, and substitutes. If the purpose of our politicians is to improve education, the answer is not to continuously deny our educators the resources they need or the respect they sincerely deserve and are not receiving. Vouchers for private schools are not what Iowans want. Vouchers are not what Iowans need. Private schools deny students with disabilities. Private schools are only accessible to those who can afford to drive their kids long distances & have the time to do so. This is not the real, diverse world our children will enter. Iowa politicians stop disrespect the hardworking teachers, like myself, who are tired of getting beaten down instead of invested in. Invest in us. Invest in our kids ALL our kids. Not just the rich, highachieving ones. Enough. You are losing teachers at unprecedented rates due to your unprecedented gutting of education. Enough.

Name: Blake Hammond

Comment: In a state full of education choice provided by open enrollment, using public tax dollars for private school is not needed. What accountability exists for these funds? Politicians have said "the parents" are the accountability. In state after state using education savings accounts/vouchers, fraud and misuse of funds comes out after the funds are gone. Families can't be the monitors of the funds in this way. Public schools have not received funding to address inflation, so we will fund a new education pathway (so we are told) while not adequately funding where the vast majority of Iowa students attend public schools. Private schools are not well monitored, not accountable like our public school system, and don't have to provide an education to every student. A vote for education savings accounts/vouchers is a vote for winners and losers in education. Public schools lose. Public school students and families will lose. The Iowa quarter released in 2004 marking Iowa as a

"Foundation in Education" is lost. Vote no for education savings accounts/vouchers and vote yes to funding that addresses the needs of the public school students including an increase to address inflation.

Name: Elizabeth Rich

Comment: I am a parent of Iowa public school students and an educator in an Iowa public school. These initiatives are illadvised and detrimental to Iowas children, families, and communities. They are also a slap in the face to Iowas educators, public employees who work tirelessly and with a high level of dedication, to serve their communities. These actions, if implemented, will most likely widen achievement gaps, increase costs, harm students, and harm communities, especially communities with higher levels of poverty and minority communities. Iowans depend on public schools for much more than the education of their children. Across most of Iowa, especially rural areas, public schools provide access to meals, healthcare, mental health supports. Iowas public schools are not perfect. Neither are Iowas private schools. Through purposeful investment in public education, we can better ensure that Iowas schools are well positioned to drive increases in student achievement and ultimately economic growth. These efforts can and should align with Future Ready Iowa. The most equitable and least disruptive way of providing educational options to families is by helping Iowas public school systems grow their programs and expand the options that they are able to provide. Iowas educators are innovative, as has been shown more than ever in the past year. Iowas local School Boards invest in innovative programs and act to expand services and programs for their students. Local businesses and organizations form meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships with their local Districts. Key Points for Consideration Public education is meant to be the great equalizer, open to all students. Iowas public schools serve all students in their communities. Regardless of disability, income, race, religion, level of academic achievement, or transiency, Iowas public educators welcome them all. Iowas demographics are changing, poverty rates are increasing, families are more transient, levels of childhood trauma are higher than in the past. All of this alongside declining enrollment across 2/3 of Iowas school Districts due to population declines in most of our State. It is time to rally around schools and invest in them, not attack them because they are being asked to serve students and families with increasingly complex needs in an increasingly complex society with increasingly complex rules, regulations, and requirements placed upon them by the Legislature. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in Iowa is and has been focused on building supportive relationships between the DE and AEAs. The system is built on the understanding that Districts that are experiencing the highest levels of need should be provided with additional supports and resources, not have resources and supports stripped away from them. The focus is on growth and improvement, not punishment and sanctions. This is based on the acknowledgement that the Districts demonstrating the highest levels of need often serve a large population of students who experience various forms of adversity. As one example, 75% of the buildings on the current Comprehensive Schools list are in the 25% of Districts in Iowa with the highest poverty rates. These designations are also reserved for schools who receive federal Title I funds. Schools should not be punished for the demographics or experiences of their residents or their receipt of certain federal funds, they should be supported and assisted. The educators who choose to work in these Districts are also some of the strongest and most wellintentioned professionals, they are heroes and angels. They accept the challenges of teaching students who are experiencing trauma and adversity and work tirelessly to improve the quality of life for their students and communities. These Districts provide expansive programs and supports in innovative ways. These schools are places where educators can make the most profound impact on students. Rhetoric about 'failing schools' and schools 'falling behind' could not be further from the truth. Demonizing schools, and worse demonizing educators, for serving underserved populations is beyond misguided and offensive to those educators and the families they serve. Public schools serve as an economic driver for their communities. Public schools are one of the largest employers in many of Iowas

communities providing hundreds if not thousands of jobs in each of their communities. They are also large customers for local contractors, vendors, stores, service providers, and other businesses. The overall health of the business community is tied to the health of the public school system. Strengthening public school strengthens communities. Private schools, charter schools, and open enrollment result in and incentivize white flight and reverse segregation based on income, race, and social class. In most cases they are able to limit who they accept. Put simply, some families choose a school option based on a desire to get away from those kids, whether that means black students, students with disabilities, poor students, nonChristian students, or some other group that is perceived to be holding their child back or holding their child's school back. Iowa's public schools are responsible for providing a full curriculum including core academic subject areas and a full suite of exploratory and elective options, meeting the requirements set forth in Iowa Code for school accreditation. They are responsible for providing Special Education services, federally funded Title programs, nursing, counseling, food, transportation, extracurriculars. And providing all of these in an equitable, evidence-based manner with staff who are highly trained and closely supervised. In most communities with private schools, students from those schools still attend public schools for access to these programs and services which private schools are unable to provide. Most students in Iowa do not, and will not, have access to school choices. Much of Iowa is simply too rural and sparsely populated to support multiple school systems. Even in larger communities, bleeding enrollment from public schools weakens them. There is an economy of scale with regards to education and charter school and voucher systems create additional systems, making each part less sustainable over time. If anything, Iowa needs to consider incentivizing sharing of programs in order to improve efficiency and the overall quantity and quality of the programs available to all students, regardless of where they attend school. Public funds should remain under public control with assurances that they serve the public purpose. There are tight controls and systems in place within Iowa's public schools to ensure that taxpayer funds are used appropriately. Putting public schools into a position where they are forced to compete with neighboring District, private schools, is not a motivator to do better but a distraction from the core mission. Leaders must spend more time focused on marketing, branding, and competing. The focus turns to the message and public perception instead of the actual work of teaching and learning. Funds will be used, out of necessity, for promotion, advertising, or other expenses meant to make the school look more attractive than the other options that are available. None of these things improve the quality of education and actually take resources (time and money) away from where they should be spent. Charter school and school voucher systems in other States have been shown to be ineffective, harmful to student learning, and a waste of taxpayer money. Please consider these perspectives and the ways in which these proposals would result in widened gaps, demoralized educators, and have a disproportionate impact on communities of poverty, color, and adversity.

Name: Merlin Pfannkuch

Comment: Those trying to rush this legislation through should be ashamed of themselves. I guess they didn't have civics in high school. This is another example of how little regard some legislators and state executives (i.e. Gov. Reynolds) have for public participation in decisions, and thus little regard for Iowans. Unfortunately for our democracy, this way of getting what you want has become endemic at almost all levels of government. I do not want my tax dollars to go to supporting private schools.

Name: Del Holland

Comment: Instead of finding ways to take money from public schools, we need to be putting more money into public schools. When I first came to Iowa in the '70's I was proud to be part of a state that was nationally renowned for its great public schools. Unfortunately, we have steadily whittled away at the funding for them. How is it

reasonable to expect young people to either come to or stay in Iowa if our public schools are going to be continually staved for support.

Name: Cindy Nielsen

Comment: School funding is for public schools only. I am strongly opposed to the use of money intended for public schools to fund private education.

Name: Mayara Carneiro

Comment: SUPPORT

Name: Bonnie Winslow-Garvin

Comment: I am a lifelong Iowa resident and an educator and I have seen Iowa toppled from having one of the best educational programs in the country by a lack of funding. Now you propose to take my tax dollars to give public education less? We need to put more money into public education, not divide our state further into a have and have not status. A voucher program would decimate public education in Iowa, particularly in our rural communities. We are better than this. Iowans take care of everyone. I urge you to vote against an educational voucher program.

Name: Patricia Bishop

Comment: Let parents choose! 100% behind vouchers!!

Name: Wendy Blake

Comment: I am a 70 year old Iowan who has lived here my whole life. i well remember when we were first in the nation for education. Sadly through lack of legislative support for our pubic schools Iowa has fallen miserably on that list. I taught in rural Iowa schools for 33 years. Governor Ray was such a strong supporter of public education. Governor Reynolds has succeeded in dividing our state into haves and have nots. Why she is doing this is open to conjecture but very soon there will be a mass exodus from our state of young families who only want the best for our children. Please don't let this happen to our schools and communities.

Name: Mark Lettow

Comment: Vote NO on vouchers for private schools. It will hurt our public schools and the students in them if this bill is passed.

Name: Sarah Prineas

Comment: A majority of Iowans do not want this legislation even many Republicans don't want it. So why are the Legislature and governor shoving it down our throats? Why does the governor want to destroy public education in Iowa? Public money for education should go to public schools.

Name: Sonia Ettinger

Comment: Public schools need to be funded properly so that they can cope with inflationary costs, most recently. However their basic costs include increased remuneration of teachers, increased numbers of additional personnel, including Special Education teachers, paraeducators, bus drivers, lunch room staff and not least they need modernization of buildings. This already needed to be done as buildings needed to have better ventilation, not only for Covid but also for other diseases. RURAL schools are in special need. Where should money for private school vouchers come from? If students had better services available for different types of learning within public schools they may not need alternatives. There are huge educational needs especially in elementary schools for reading this is the basis of education. But the Governor's bill does not oversee the standards at which the alternative schools would perform. However in those alternative cases eg religious schools, any State Allocation should go to the SCHOOLS not to the parents. This money could be paid AFTER the children had already enrolled as the state agrees to contribute towards

educating state children to an acceptable standard. The Voucher Bill is ill thought out and should be voted DOWN..

Name: Thomas Walton

Comment: Brookings Institute 2017: "Four recent rigorous studies in the District of Columbia, Louisiana, Indiana, and Ohio used different research designs and reached the same result: on average, students that use vouchers to attend private schools do less well on tests than similar students that do not attend private schools." "Based on research in other countries and other school choice initiatives including charter schools there is reason to worry that a large scale voucher program open to families regardless of income would exacerbate segregation." <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2017/7/12/21108235/doschoolvouchersworkasthedebateheatsuphereswhatresearchreallysays/>. "The bottom line is that the research case for vouchers doesn't hold up to scrutiny, while the research case against them has been flashing warning lights for almost a decade." <https://hechingerreport.org/opinionaftertwodecadesofstudyingvoucherprogramsinnowfirmlyopposedtothem/>. The "conservative approach" is not to defund public schools, but to make them more rigorous, extend the school year to 11 months, and demand and reward achievement and exceptional teachers. Wise legislatures don't gut funding for a program like public schools that is over a century old and has educated generations of Americans to levels unknown in other parts of the world in the history of civilization. You don't gut it. You triple down.

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Name: Amy Cook

Comment: Public funds should only be used for public schools. Private schools do not have publicly elected school boards that represent their taxpayers. They are not required to test out, teach all students, and not discriminate. Taxpayer funded religious schools are a violation of our US Constitution which says church and state should be separate. Stop the attack on public schools and properly fund them and support them. The downfall of public schools will leave 90% of our Iowa children out in the cold for a high quality education. Iowa used to be first in the nation for education. The past ten years of underfunding and attacks have let down our kids and seen us slide to the middle of the pack. The attacks must stop. Our best and brightest young people are leaving the state and the teacher shortage is at a crisis point. Vote NO on unconstitutional vouchers!

Name: Josh Deutmeyer

Comment: I would urge this committee to throw out the idea of school vouchers. I do not want

my tax payer dollars to be used to pay for someone elses educational preference. Should private schools take public money, they should be held to the same bar as public schools.

Name: Pam Westrum

Comment: ISSB 1022We have 7 children who received their education through 3 of the private Christian schools in the area. There was a short period, 3 years, that we homeschooled 3 of our children. My husband worked hard and paid taxes like everyone else.My question is why should we pay for the public schools when we did not use them. Actually we paid private tuition and for others choice of public school. Let us as parents choose where our money for education goes.

Name: Cathy Stensland

Comment: Public dollars for public schools. Iowa used to be proud of the fact that we ranked first in the nation for education. Iowa needs to fully fund our public schools not divert even more money away from students. Will private schools be held to the same accountability as public schools? Will private schools be required to accept all students who apply?

Name: Madonna Backstrom II

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools. Stop going against the will of the majority of Iowans. Do you understand how inaccessible private schools are to the majority of Iowans? This is reckless behavior and will continue to drive families from the state and Iowa will continue to plummet in education rankings. People over money.

Name: Robin Witt

Comment: I support educational savings accounts for students. Between SEL, mandatory masking, learning on chromebooks for several hours a day, it was clear this was not the best avenue for their education. None of these issues were related to funding but choice at a district, school, or teacher level, which we have the luxury to respond in kind but many parents do not.

Name: Ryan Mcclanahan

Comment: I support vouchers 100%. Parents should be able to choose the school that is right for their child. Public schools have decided to allow filthy books and curriculum into its buildings. Children should not have to be exposed to this. My tax dollars should be spent at the school of my choice!

Name: Eric Sickler

Comment: Why in the world would any selfrespecting state leader or legislator support DECREASING funding for Iowas already underfunded public schools when were looking at a recordsetting BUDGET SURPLUS? The best investment we can make in Iowas future is to bolster public schools that, by the governors own admission, are failing. The proposed voucher scenario represents ZERO fiscal innovation or creativity on from the governors office. We must do better, and we have the surplus funding to do so.

Name: Holly White

Comment: I support school choice. I was on the fence because of many of the points mentioned in other post BUT after multiple attempts the public school seems to be a Private government school I dont want my children raised in a government led agency. I want to be involved and be able to put my child in a school that aligns with our values. Eg dont tell my 14 y/o she should donate eggs to pay for college. (Btw this is also state funded. Phase 2?) sounds insane? happy to provide proof or this and other situations. Please give parents an option that fits to support families. United, supported family units are so important to our community! A free market allows for a true democratic environment.

Name: Susan Helling

Comment: Please do NOT allow Iowa to move to a voucher system. The percentage of students this plan would benefit in Iowa is small. Many families would not be able to afford full tuition even with voucher help, therefore only assisting the already privileged and alienating lower and middle class Iowans. Vouchers will damage rural schools which not only provide educational opportunities but are also often the main employer in rural towns. Vouchers are bad for Iowa

Name: Deb Hansen

Comment: I urge this committee to not support public dollars being used to pay tuition at private schools. Private Schools are not held to the same level of scrutiny as public schools. Private Schools do not need to accept and make accommodations for every student as do public schools. Over 100 million dollars of tax payer money is already being diverted to private schools. In other states with voucher programs over 80% of the voucher money goes to students already attending private schools! I urge you all to support Iowas public school system!

Name: Kathy Pietraszewski

Comment: These vouchers are long overdue. I wanted them as early as the 90s when raising our two sons and seeing what was in the public school textbooks. People voicing opposition here say that tax payer dollars should go to public schools only. What is the logic in that? There is none unless you want a State dictatorship with onesided thinking and all opposing ideas are considered threats. Opponents fear this bill would encourage people to leave public schools. Nothing could be more beneficial for the quality of education for students. Where there is competition, standards increase and results become the focus. Where there is no competition, the floor becomes the ceiling and students are the losers. Shouldnt we focus on the students rather than our own pocketbooks? We need this bill. Do the right thing for students and for America. Make it possible for parents to get the best education for their children. Our State schools are indoctrination factories.

Name: John Vorwald

Comment: I am opposed to this legislation. Anyone with any civic sense would be. This bill strips our state's once prized education system of funding for a voucher system with no oversight. It has the potential to least of worst to gate keep quality education for those who can afford it. At worst: it provides a means to silently fill bank accounts of shady 'for profit' education while also providing an awful education for those who attend one of these voucher schools. It is a con that continues the lie that our public education system has taken away parental control. That fear monger will only let unscrupulous tricksters make off with more money while the infrastructure of public education decays and leaves us with a state that can't think, let alone be able to succeed. If the state legislature really actually cares about making sure there's something valuable in this state's future, they will not let this sham of a bill move forward, and instead make the investments to our public education to make it something we can be proud of again.

Name: Steve Westerberg

Comment: For many years, a clear majority of Iowa's taxpayers have been opposed to vouchers. If taxpayers knew nearly \$100 million taxpayer dollars are already being spent annually on private schools through taxpayer funded services and tax breaks, even fewer would support vouchers. What will the Governor and legislators do to meet the needs and wishes of the majority of Iowa's citizens if this voucher plan passes into law? Political leaders love to say they are following the wishes of their constituents. Shouldn't that be the case with this issue?

Name: Kathleen VanDeWalle

Comment: Private schools are often too far from home in rural Iowa. Rural public schools are

very important to the existence of rural towns. Does this bill promote the existence and growth of rural Iowa communities? Children with special needs are served by public schools. Private schools often do not have services to meet the needs of all children including those with disabilities.. I think that public funding should make the best services available for all Iowans including those with disabilities. I urge the legislature to increase spending for public schools.

Name: Jennifer Leonhard

Comment: I am in favor of this bill. We should be funding students, not buildings. The money should follow the students and be in their best interest for their best learning environment. Those who oppose this bill are not concerned about students who fail, or are lower income and do not have the opportunities for a better education. If Iowa wants to continue to prosper we must put students first.

Name: Allison Uhl

Comment: I am strongly opposed to this bill. Public funds should never be used for private education. If there are resources lacking in a given public school (special needs, for example) it is legislatures responsibility to fund and solve that problem. Every single Iowa student should have access to a FREE and high quality public education. This bill does not grant access for the 49 counties without private schools and it funnels funds away from our public schools. This system has been trialed and failed in other states. Iowa is already suffering from brain drain, this will cement Iowa as a low achieving state permanently. I moved here from Chicago as a young married couple literally FOR the excellent public education. What is Iowa left to be known for? Please allow ample public scrutiny of this bill and most importantly listen to your constituents.

Name: Katy Anderson

Comment: As an employee of an Iowa public school, a grandmother of children attending public schools in Iowa, and as a property tax payer, I have great concerns about the need of public funding for public schools. Private schools should never take away funds allocated for free public education! Private schools have their own private funding. Private schools and those who choose to send their children to private schools do not deserve any money from my taxes. This proposal is outrageous. Please stop it.

Name: Devan Baty

Comment: I write to express my vehement opposition to the proposed school voucher bill. Iowa has a long tradition of strong public schools. As an Iowan who both attended public schools and the parent of a public school graduate, I am deeply grateful for the dedication of public teachers and for the outstanding education they provide our state's children. They deserve public support and depend on public funds to fulfill their mission. Moreover, all children have the right to an excellent education in our state, including special needs and disabled children. The proposed voucher bill has no accountability measures to ensure quality care and accommodations for such students. That's outrageous. I urge you to vote NO to vouchers and to invest in public education.

Name: Jayne Finch

Comment: I am strongly opposed to the voucher bill. Private schools, which arent obligated to meet the same standards as public schools or accept all students, should not be funded with public money. The chronic underfunding of our public schools is destroying Iowas strong tradition of excellence in education and weakening our state.

Name: Katy Anderson

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allocated for free public education! Private schools have their own private funding. Private schools and those who choose to send their children to private schools do not deserve any money from my taxes. This proposal is outrageous. Please stop it.

Name: Happy Carter

Comment: As a mother of two in Iowa public schools I fully support this bill and the vouchers. I went to public school in both Des Moines and Ames growing up and the public schools are nothing like what they used to be. As a conservative family I worry about my kids education and have strongly considered private school the last two years and this bill would help our family. I wish the public schools were what they used to be but unfortunately they are not. We have a long way to go but I know with the right people we can get there.

Name: Michael Trenkamp

Comment: All parents deserve a choice in where their kids should go be educated not just parents who can afford to have choice.

Name: Jolie LeVere

Comment: NO to using public funds for private schools. There will be no oversight or accountability over the tax dollars given to individuals to be used by the private schools. VOTE NO!

Name: Sue Atwater

Comment: Public school need to be fully funded by state and federal tax dollars. If I want to send my children to a private school I should pay for that out of my own pocket. It is my choice to send them there and I need to make the sacrifice to do that. Will private schools be required to keep tuition at the same level as a public school per pupil rate? Or will they be able to charge the current rate and get state money too. What will happen to STO's and the Tuition and Textbook taxes credits? Will private schools be allowed to double dip? Will my property taxes go up to cover the school's loss of revenue. You owe it to the people of Iowa to answer all their questions and be transparent as you work through this process. Remember you were not elected on this single issue. Be leaders and listen to the people who elected you.

Name: Jason Dreckman

Comment: Please do not move this bill forward. This bill will not help send needy kids to private institutions like you think it will. It will make hardship for good public schools instead. And if private schools are going to receive public money they should be mandated to accept everyone and provide the same programming for kids with IEPs and other services that our public schools are required to provide. Please just provide increased funding that is adequate to support the increase in operational costs instead and all Iowans will win.

Name: Jim Gilbert

Comment: I have served as a public school educator in Iowa for 36 years; the last 25 as an elementary school principal. Never has the need for legislative support for public education been greater than it is now. The proposed voucher plan will absolutely reduce funding for our public schools. This will NOT improve our educational system in Iowa. Instead, put the time and effort in working with actual educators to implement the best school improvement efforts supported by research. Ill be the first in line to help. Call me.

Name: Edward Cranston

Comment: Please vote no on school vouchers. Strong Iowa public schools are a critical way to attract young couples to stay in Iowa to provide a strong education for their children. Pulling funds from public education in the name of choice isnt fair to all Iowa

families. Help is needed for all public school districts especially the ones in the small rural communities. Choice is already available with Iowas open enrollment options. If you are really concerned about providing choice, give women the right to choose.

Name: Colleen Rich

Comment: PLEASE vote no on school vouchers. I am a retired teacher who spent 41 years teaching in the public school system. I was part of the the many great things that public schools can offer. . . most importantly the fact that we offer an education to EVERY child. There are hundreds of public school teachers across the state that pour their heart and soul into their job every single day. I have watched funding for public schools drop over the years, making it very difficult for these people to do their jobs. I am from a very rural county with no private school opportunities nearby. Stripping funding from our district to give to students from larger communities with access to private schools is not giving our students a choice at all. It will only make it more difficult to pay teachers and support staff in order to give these students the education that they deserve. Private schools should not receive public money if they are not required to play by the same rules as the public schools.

Name: Nicole Skaar

Comment: I am opposed to this bill. The argument that competition will force public schools to improve is incorrect. Public school cannot increase their own revenue; they are bound by the funding allocated by the legislators who are proposing to take money away from public schools. Rural schools will suffer the most from this bill, yet most of Iowa districts are rural. Vote NO to using public funds for private schools but rather fully fund our public schools.

Name: Russelle Leggett

Comment: In all the 65+ years I've lived in Iowa, I've never seen such a threat to public education as I'm seeing now with the proposal to give public funding to those who chose to attend private schools. I directly oppose such a plan, rather I support more funding to public schools and educators, those who are most equipped to improve the educational experience of all children in Iowa.

Name: Matthieu Biger

Comment: An overwhelming majority of Iowans of all political, religious, socioeconomic backgrounds have agreed that public schools need to be funded and protected to continue to serve their communities. Please listen to your constituents and not the token few who support this egregious bill and vote "no." One may also follow the outofstate money, and question the skewed principles, and the outside influence behind this further disinvestment in public education. Or consciously look at lobbyist declarations to confirm that the people of Iowa and those representing students, teachers, principals, and, yes, even ecumenical faith groups oppose this bill. Nail in the proverbial coffin for a supposedly fiscally conservative majority in Des Moines: that this bill surely is not.

Name: Jennifer Deninger

Comment: Vouchers are the wrong direction for Iowans our public schools need help not legislation that undermines.

Name: Jamie Flathers

Comment: Public money belongs in PUBLIC schools!! NO VOUCHERS!

Name: Pam Gronau

Comment: I support our state giving the parents the right to choose which school is best for their children. We need to fund the student and not the institution, and school choice should not be limited to only those who can afford it. Our schools have been

adequately funded it's a matter of how they choose to spend those funds, such as excessive administrative positions. This should help create healthy competition which will hopefully cause our schools to listen to parents' concerns, rather than ignore us.

Name: Jodi Lindberg

Comment: Public Funds = Public Schools. It is that simple.

Name: Shannon Patrick

Comment: Opposed. I have three school-age children, and I want them to have good public schools, not a choice between unaccountable private schools and underfunded public schools. Don't blame this special interest bill on us parents!

Name: Aidan Yoder

Comment: I am very opposed to public tax money being used to fund private schools through the use of school vouchers. As a substitute teacher in the public school system it is clear that public schools need more funding, not to be defunded. Some of the students I have worked with would not be able to have the proper care in private schools, which wouldn't even have to accept them. This diversion of money away from schools, especially rural schools, will lead to more consolidation and worse educational outcomes for the people who are the future of our state. The only people who will be helped by these maneuvers are the out-of-state special interests and the unaccountable private school leaders. For these reasons I strongly am opposed to this bill.

Name: Elizabeth Larson

Comment: Please support public money for public schools. Having 3 children currently in public schools (by choice), it has been so discouraging to see what the conservative legislature is doing to my children's education. You say that you want children to have access to the best education and assume that private schools are the only schools who could possibly offer the best. I firmly believe that there are many public schools in the state that far outshine any private school in the state. My education at Pleasant Valley during the height of public school funding far surpassed my private school classmates in college. I have seen firsthand how amazing Iowa's public schools can be when they are fully funded. My husband and I chose to stay in Iowa primarily for the quality of the public schools and the state's commitment to public education. It has been difficult over the last 6 years having to explain to my youngest child why she doesn't have the same educational opportunities that her oldest brother had. You see, since my son started kindergarten 10 years ago, our district has been forced to cut Spanish from elementary school, elementary specials, 2 foreign languages from the high school not to mention all of the staff that has been cut. This includes our district trying to save money by combining my daughter's 1st Grade class with a kindergarten class so they only had to hire one teacher. You may use this as evidence that public schools are failing, but to me it's evidence that the Iowa legislature is failing. I simply dread what the future holds for my 5th grader's remaining education in Iowa. Her older siblings will likely make it out relatively unscathed, but her educational opportunities could be significantly, negatively impacted by vouchers. Our school district is doing their best to provide the best education for my kids with the resources they have been given, but they can only do so much when they are continually being starved of even a reasonable adjustment for inflation. I urge you to say no to vouchers and say yes to a fully funded public education system.

Name: JoAnn Gage

Comment: As a high school English teacher in Iowa public schools with 28 years of experience, I can attest that the strain of underfunding is hurting students by limiting programs and packing in classrooms. We have fallen from the best schools in the nation to

number 24 according to US News and World Report, and a big reason is inadequate funding since 2011. Many schools across the state have locked their libraries or have limited library hours because they couldn't fund librarians. To help, English teachers purchased books with their own money to create classroom libraries, only to have state legislators like Sen. Jake Chapman attend board meetings and rally others to attack books offered in their classrooms that reflect the makeup of the diverse student body. It appears these attacks on funding, on libraries, and on teachers are all a plan to make public schools less valued by parents. But attacking public schools can only hurt Iowa and Iowans. When we lose public schools, we lose pride in our communities and property values go down. I hope that our elected leaders do what is best for Iowa by properly funding our schools with far more than the starvation diet 2.5 percent allowable growth that has become the norm over the past decade of Republican leadership. And please don't take away public school funding to pay for students who already attend private schools. That would be like giving vouchers to parents for building their own backyard playgrounds instead of funding the public park.

Name: Marshall Sanders

Comment: My wife and I have lived in Iowa our entire lives. Our heritage is here. We choose to live here and raise our 3 school age children because we love this state and the people. We SUPPORT VOUCHERS. Tax dollars should go to the school the kids attend. Those teachers and school deserve that money because they are educating the kids. Thank you for reading my comments.

Name: Tiffany Beavers

Comment: I appreciate you working towards giving parents a choice in their students education. Medicaid patients have a choice where they receive care, food stamps can be spent at any grocery store and convenience store, my child can pick the college that fits their needs and aspirations so why should we not be able to send our children to the school we believe will best serve them? I believe this will make schools become more competitive and get back to teaching what was meant to be taught in schools. I think people dont realize that the public schools would still receive some of that tax payer dollars as the school district the child lives in even if they choose to attend private school. Giving people a reasonable choice is never a bad idea as long as everyone has the choice not just some.

Name: Susan Kuyper

Comment: This is a very unwise idea. This can only weaken an already challenged education It can only further erode the educational offerings for our young people.

Name: Susan Kuyper

Comment: This is a very unwise idea. This can only weaken an already challenged education It can only further erode the educational offerings for our young people.

Name: Kerry Lust

Comment: I have three children in public schools. My 15 year old son has autism. Because of his disabilities, private schools will not accept him. Even if he received a voucher, he would not be able to use it. When you hear the term school choice, remember that private schools have the choice who to accept. Not the students. Not their parents. Tax dollars should not be given to schools who can discriminate against children like my son and who do not have to comply with the same rules as public schools who also receive tax dollars. Every public school district in Iowa has the word community in its name. They are run by school boards that consist of elected community members and are accountable for every tax dollar that they spend. They do not deny any child an education. Will private and charter schools be held to the same standard? I am concerned that if this bill passes less money will be available for the programs my son needs in his public school. Please consider the impact these proposals would have on some of Iowa's most needy students. Students like my son,

who will never have a "choice."

Name: Erin Leiran

Comment: Please strengthen our public schools instead of allowing dollars to go to private schools that dont have to include everyone.

Name: Eliza Willis

Comment: Directing public money to private schools not only undermines the quality of public schools, it erodes one of the essential pillars of our democracy. Public schools must educate everyone without discrimination. Not only do public schools serve every child, they provide a focus for activities that bring a community together. They also provide a vital locus for democratic participation and governance. Introducing the proposed voucher program would entail using public money to support discrimination and undermine democracy and sense of community. The negative impacts of diverting public funds to private use will be particularly strongly felt in our rural towns where public schools are central to community life. Please dont pass this legislation. Iowans deserve better. Five generations of my family have been educated in Iowas public schools. I want my tax dollars to ensure Iowas fine public education remains available to students now and in the future so they may benefit as my family has.

Name: Meghann Puffer

Comment: As a public school teacher for 22 years I can assure you all that public schools are doing an amazing job. I don't understand the rhetoric the Republicans have been pushing for the last year or so. Public schools are the foundation to communities in Iowa, large and small. I invite any of those on this committee to sit down and discuss. Additionally, I too have a son on the spectrum and the fact that we would give state dollars to a school that would not accept him is sickening. At the end of the day it seems the agenda is to not be accepting of differences. History proves this a far too dangerous approach.

Name: Mary Riewerts

Comment: I have been an Iowa public school educator for 25 years. I chose to have my children attend K12 public schools in a diverse, Urban 8 school district where I teach. have been so discouraged by the current Governor and her insistence to gut our once strong public schools in Iowa. Public money should stay in our public schools. There is already parent/school choice throughout the state, and taking money away from our current schools is only going to hurt our students. FUND our public schools dont take it away!!

Name: Jeff Rubino

Comment: Some of my tax dollars Will go towards education. That is a great thing as long as oue next generation is learning. It seems like common sense that the parent and student should be able to chose the school that fits the family best and all of the tax dollars should go where that child attends school. That is the most fair and equitable solution for all families regardless of economic status.

Name: Emily Christensen

Comment: Most private schools offer a certain number of scholarships for students who cannot afford to attend. Public dollars are for public schools. Say No to public school dollars for private schools! This idea continues to harm our public school system! Stand up for public schools! Stand up for the students and teachers of public schools! Stand up for education! And stop supporting special interests that benefit the wealthy!

Name: Courtney Collier

Comment: I support this legislation. Its common sense. In Iowa we dont have public school dollars we have education dollars. Those dollars should be available for families to

spend on their unique childrens education, in the ways they know meet the needs of their children best. No two children are the same and education is not one size fits all. These dollars for education should not be monopolized by public school districts but rather in the same way that we allow Medicaid and food stamps recipients to choose their doctor facility, or choose their grocery store, education dollars should be able to be spent in the same way. In Iowa we should be funding students not buildings and institutions. It is a false claim to say that education savings accounts will harm public schools. Currently if a family chooses private schools for their children, the public school district in which they live does not receive the SSA funds for those students. Under this new proposed legislation there would be no change in financial impact to the public school district. The only thing that will change is that the SSA dollars that were not being received by the public school district would now be available to that family for their childrens education. Its time to offer school choice and students first ESAs for all students in Iowa. If public schools dont want parents to choose private schools, perhaps they should start analyzing all the different reasons that families are choosing private schools over public schools. Instead public school district should try to make themselves the destination of choice for parents and families. Be the best school district there is. Figure that out. Clearly \$3.6 billion in K12 education dollars is not insufficient. As the governor said there are states that perform better with public schools and spend less. We have a spending problem in our public schools. We have a budgeting problem in our public schools. Stop wasting money on overpaid admin roles. Pay the teachers better. Stop sexualizing our children. Stop teaching anti American anti American Marxist and communist trash curriculum. Stop allowing teachers to abuse and molest and groom our children. Stop allowing bad behavior to go unpunished. Then perhaps parents will choose their neighborhood public school over a private school that is an hour away.

Name: Jenn Turner

Comment: I support this bill. And if I understand correctly, public schools still get dollars even if the student leaves they get money and don't even have the student! And, if they are teaching our children reading, writing and arithmetic instead of Marxism families would stay! Competition is good! It pushes us to do better! Great bill! Each family will have the opportunity and that is calked Equity a big topic in our schools! Giving every child what they need to succeed!

Name: Carissa Williams

Comment: Its truly a shame that were seeing another attempt at passing this voucher legislation. Our public schools need more support, not less. Our tax dollars should support public schools, which are here to support all students. I strongly oppose the idea that tax dollars should be redistributed to an individual student/family. A strong public education system benefits the entire community and its a shame to see Iowas strong history of support of public schools being wiped away.

Name: Kristen Hartman

Comment: I am a proud public school teacher. This bill would be detrimental to public schools. They need more money, not less to meet todays students needs. Public money is for ALL kids, not just the ones private schools choose to accept. Private schools are not held to the same standards as public schools nor do they have to disclose how the money is spent. That is not the definition of public money. This bill is wrong for Iowa.

Name: Stephanie Trannel

Comment: Vouchers are bad for Iowa because they strip money from the majority and benefit the few. Vouchers are a pet project that the majority of Iowans simply dont support. Elected officials are elected to represent all Iowans, and must do what is best for most Iowans. Vouchers have a terrible record nationally and we shouldnt throw good money at bad policies. Lets fully fund public schools instead, which is something

everyone can be proud of.

Name: Thomas Stanley

Comment: 1. Public funding for public education at every level insufficient and falling. This proposal will only accelerate this trend in the medium and long term. 2. Private schools are under no legal obligation to educate disadvantaged and disabled and challenged students. This proposal will concentrate such students in the public sector while shifting funding away from public education to private education. 3. Most rural areas do not have private schools. This proposal will have the long term effect of encouraging rural to urban migration, accelerating the collapse of smaller rural communities while benefitting only urban communities. 4. If the state is obliged by the state constitution to provide for public education, then this proposal is in the long term unconstitutional because it undermines and threatens to destroy public education entirely.

Name: Courtney Collier

Comment: Key provisions of the STUDENTS FIRST ACT include: Parents who choose to enroll their children in an accredited private school will receive \$7,598 for approved educational expenses, the amount of per pupil funding currently allocated annually by the state for each student. Parents can use these funds for tuition, fees, and other qualified expenses at an accredited private school. This funding will flow through a system that never places the funds directly into the parents hands, but rather goes straight to the educational institution. Other student funding generated by categorical state funding formulas will remain with public school districts. It is estimated that Iowa's public schools will retain about \$1,205 per pupil in categorical funding for each student who resides in their district but chooses to attend a private school. Since public schools currently receive no funding for students enrolled in a private school, this would be an increase in funding. In the first year that a family chooses to send their child to a private school and receive this funding, public schools will still get the \$7,598 they normally receive for a student, even though the student chooses to attend a private school. The state in effect will double pay the first year, which will minimize any funding disruptions for public schools. This is also made necessary by federal requirements related to how public school students are counted each year. After year one, the public school would continue to receive approximately \$1,205 in categorical funding from the state, even though the student is enrolled in a private school, but will no longer receive the \$7,598, since those funds are following the child to the accredited school that best fits their needs. It is past time that we fund the student in a way that will help ensure the best educational outcome. All students currently attending public school and kindergarten would be eligible for this program in the 2023-24 school year. For students already attending an accredited private school, the program would be phased in over a period of three years. In Year 1 (2023-24), accredited private school students at or below 300% of the federal poverty level would be eligible (\$83,250 income for a family of four). In Year 2 (2024-25), accredited private school students at or below 400% of the federal poverty level would qualify (\$111,000 income for a family of four). In Year 3 (2025-26), all students, regardless of income, would qualify. Let's remember that we all pay taxes for education, even those citizens that do not have children. Those taxes are paid to the state regardless of income. I believe, therefore, that it is fair that every parent, regardless of income, should have the opportunity to use this system to send their child to an educational institution that best fits their needs. The bill also gives public school districts the flexibility to use unspent and ongoing funding from Teacher Leadership and Compensation, Professional Development, and Talented & Gifted categorical funds for increasing teacher salaries. There is currently almost \$100 million statewide in unspent funds in these categorical accounts and almost \$250 million is allocated to them each year. Public education funding in Iowa has grown over a billion dollars since Fiscal Year 2012. Unfortunately, some of our public schools are not serving our students well. Teachers, parents, and students are reporting egregious discipline problems in some schools, and a small number are

listed as failing schools due to plummeting scores. Unfortunately, it is also true that some of our public schools have now embraced an ideology that they in fact own the children and know better than parents. Parents that challenge the indoctrination of their students in AntiAmerican ideology and LGBT objectives that are contrary to their values are increasingly ignored and villainized by a growing number of school districts in Iowa. I know this because I have received hundreds of emails and spoken to numerous parents frustrated and frightened for the future of their children and their country. They are often ignored, berated, silenced, and in some cases villainized by arrogant school personnel who consider themselves professionals who can dismiss the concerns of parents. This is not only wrong; it is profoundly dangerous for the future of our Republic. Government institutions do not own our children and have no right to inject themselves between children and parents by assaulting the values of families and ignoring the authority of parents. In a growing number of our public schools, obviously obscene books that have no place in a school library because they are not ageappropriate are defended and usually kept on the shelves by a process stacked against concerned parents. Meanwhile, some teachers in these districts gleefully promote these books to their students, in defiance of the concerns of parents. Some schools choose to ignore prohibitions against the teaching of Critical Race Theory, with school officials caught on tape bragging about how they work around the law to advance their agenda. The Board of Education has had the opportunity to enforce the law and hold wrongdoers accountable; unfortunately, they have chosen not to do so. I have stated repeatedly in my newsletters that superintendents and administrators doing it right should speak to those doing it wrong in Iowa, which could have resulted in selfreflection and a course correction. Unfortunately, this either has not happened, or the warnings have not been heeded. Combine these facts with the need to ensure that students are allowed to flourish in an educational setting that best fits their needs and the path is clear: we must fundamentally change how we fund education, and that begins with funding the student, as opposed to funding the educational establishment. The hysteria that School Choice will destroy, or damage public schools is not supported by facts, as states with aggressive school choice programs in place for over two decades see only about 5% of students attend private schools. If in fact, a huge number of students were to leave public schools to attend accredited private schools, then it becomes profoundly clear just how important it was that we gave parents greater choice, since such an exodus would lay bare the reality that these schools were failing our students. I believe that most of our public schools are doing it right, and for those that are not, the wakeup call is coming.

Name: Nick Oswald

Comment: As a public school teacher of 19 years, I cannot stress how important it is that you vote NO to sending public money to private schools. Private schools do not have to accept every student and can openly discriminate against and exclude students from their schools based on their ability (i.e. students with special needs and students with IEP's and 504 Plans), race, gender, sexual orientation and gender identify. They also are not held to the same standards as public schools in Iowa. If we truly want to have one of the best states in the country in education, why are we not funding public education? Also, if this bill was truly meant to help lower income families attend private schools, then what is to be done when those students this bill supposedly helps cannot afford the remaining costs the tax money doesn't provide? Also how are these families supposed to afford transportation and other school fees? It's clear that this is just a front to allow the rich in Iowa to become even richer through tax breaks all the while defunding our public schools. This is NOT good for our state. Please vote NO!

Name: Lori Benz

Comment: Iowa was once known for its high literacy rate and quality public education. Sadly, that is no longer true. The many years of underfunding public education has put Iowas schools on a race to the bottom. The current proposed legislation to allocate

public funds for private education will accelerate that decline and begs the question: why are we not focused on improving public education which ALL students are entitled to? We are undermining the future of our children and Iowa if we divert public funds from our public schools. I urge this legislature to abandon this irresponsible proposal and turn its energy to adequately funding our public schools.

Name: Nathan Bond

Comment: Nathan Bond, product of Iowa public schools. Page 8 lines 1620 of this bill protect discrimination by non public schools on the basis of disability. The disabled are a protected class under state discrimination law. Without state authority to require admission of all Iowa students as a previsaion to receive payment, this is state funded school segregation and thus unconstitutional. Thank you

Name: Kim Mayer

Comment: I am opposed to the school voucher bills. As a former employee of a private school, we also sent our 2 children to that private school through grade 6, I have seen first hand how vouchers could hurt students that dont fit the mode of private schools. They do not always have the resources ,teachers or materials to accommodate children with special or behavioral needs. Also, there are huge fundraisers and donors for scholarships so that students dont have to pay the high tuition!! (we were one of those donors for a preschooler) KEEP THE TAXPAYERS \$\$ IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS! If parents want a private education,great, but that is their financial responsibility!!

Name: Molly Lawry

Comment: I strongly oppose vouchers/SSB1022 public funding should be used for public schools. Private schools are not held accountable for the same standards (i.e., the potential to teach religion, the ability to discriminate against LGTBQ+, special education resources, etc.). Taking funding away from public schools will harm our public schools and communities. Additionally Im concerned that this blurs the line between separation of church and state. As a taxpayer, homeowner, and parent, I am concerned this will decrease the quality of Iowa schools, affect Iowa children, and decrease our property values. Please oppose this legislation.

Name: Nathan Bond

Comment: Nathan Bond, product of Iowa public schools. Page 8 lines 1620 of this bill protect discrimination by non public schools on the basis of disability. The disabled are a protected class under state discrimination law. Without state authority to require admission of all Iowa students as a previsaion to receive payment, this is state funded school segregation and thus unconstitutional. Thank you

Name: Josh Swalla

Comment: I am in full support of this bill and believe the state of Iowa should fund students and. It schools.Ive seen and heard many comments about how public money should fund the public. I fully agree with this, but look at this issue differently. These funds, which are generated by taxing individuals should be given back to the individuals to be used as the individuals deem appropriate.Schools have made conscious decisions to move away from neutral teachings and have politicized curriculum and the school itself. Parents should have the ability to determine if a school is right for their child and the tax dollars they pay should be allowed to follow their child.This bill will force schools to become more competitive, offer a better overall educational product, as well as listen to parents concerns.

Name: Janet Seiz

Comment: Senators, Please do not reduce the resources available to Iowa's public schools. When I moved to Iowa over 30 years ago, I was impressed that the state's public schools were recognized as excellent and both Republicans and Democrats strongly supported public education. In the last few years, the legislature and the governor

seem to want to weaken public schools and expand private education as an alternative. I believe this is a huge mistake.. Public education is a critical pillar of American democracy. Going to school together promotes understanding and respect across differences, and conveys a sense of equality. It strengthens community. Iowans in both cities and small towns want good public schools for their children. Please do not pursue the governor's plan to transfer resources from public to private education.

Name: Morgan Molden

Comment: This voucher proposal will not help kids in public schools, which the vast majority of Iowa kids are in and is the only option for many children. Public money should fund public Ed, not private education for the rich and urban. Increase public school funding and serve the entire community. No voucher scheme.

Name: Loree Horn

Comment: I strongly support this bill! Public education is on the decline with lower test scores and some teachers/administrators pushing ideology on students rather than just focusing on reading science, math, etc. If parents feel their children are no longer receiving a quality education in public schools, they should have the freedom to choose a different path. Currently when a child goes to a private school the district no longer receives the SSA funds for that student and these funds sit unspent in the state general fund. Under this proposal, the funds would instead go to the school of the parents choice, rather than sit in the state general fund. So this bill would have no change financially to public schools. If public schools are afraid of parents pulling their kids out, they should be asking questions, listening to parents concerns and addressing them. When public schools are not meeting the needs of parents and administrators are ignoring/dismissing parents concerns, the parents deserve to have their tax dollars follow their children for their education.

Name: Chuck Montgomery

Comment: I do not understand what is driving this legislation from the Governor. It makes little sense. Does she wish the Legislature to do further harm to our once proud educational system? The only things that would seem to explain her actions are either (1) misplaced religious zealotry, or (2) political ambition. Or both. Please do not let this legislation pass. Please demonstrate political courage and do what will cause your families and your descendants to look back on you with admiration and pride. Doing the right thing in the face of those trying to bully you has never been easy, but it does have its rewards (e.g., self respect, dignity, reputation for integrity). Chuck Montgomery, Des Moines.

Name: Connie Davids

Comment: Iowans have been clear that they do not support paying for private school. Trust our public school teachers who have been trained to educate youth, instead of parents with uninformed decisions to spend tax dollars. As a retired teacher with over 30 years of experience, and now a public librarian, I have witnessed first hand, the lack of accountability, and in some cases, neglect in the education of youth served outside the public school setting. Think of it this way, if I decided that my neighborhood park was not to my liking, would the state of Iowa pay for a membership to a private country club for my child? If my child doesn't like school lunch, how about catering in? Oh course not! Public schools offer services for all, and while I know there is always room for improvement, the answer is not to take funding away to fuel political stunts. I hope each member will vote to do what Iowans clearly want, and not feel the pressure from seeing campaigns tanked from those who previously voiced opposition. Public money for public schools.

Name: Rebecca Kmett

Comment: Im writing to dissuade you from defunding our public schools and enacting

vouchers. My family lived in Chile where they tried this and it has been disastrous, particularly for the lower socioeconomic class. All of society benefits when the general public receives a base level of education and public schools are where this happens.

Name: Andrea Triplett

Comment: Public funds should go to public schools. The creation of a voucher program takes money out of the place it belongs the most supporting our public school teachers to provide the best education possible to the greatest number of students.

Name: Heather Mathre

Comment: Vouchers/scholarships. Call it whatever you will, it means the same thing. This is a scam. A scam that will take public money and funnel it directly to forprofit private schools. These forprofit private schools will not have any oversight nor will they provide any accommodations for students with disabilities. The consequences for falling for this scam? More rural school districts will close. Students with disabilities and students that need a little more support in the classroom will not be accepted at these forprofit private schools. Programs and staff from public schools will be cut and let go. Without funds, public school children will fall further and further behind. But that is the goal of Kim Reynolds. If we give the advantaged more opportunities to expand their wealth, the less the rest will have to spread out amongst themselves. Keep the vast majority from being properly supported and educated, the less likely they are to challenge what is happening.

Name: Seth Cottrell

Comment: I support this bill and opening up education opportunities for IOWA families. IOWA families deserve to have more say and funding opportunities when it comes to their childrens education. This legislation is a good first step in helping parents and children have a voice in educating IOWAs youth.

Name: Michael Andreski

Comment: As a graduate of, and parent of 2 Iowa public school graduates, I want to register my opposition to this bill. There a few options for private schools in most of Iowa, and there is virtually no option for nonsecular private schools. Instead of taking desperately needed funds away from public schools to be spent with no oversight, fully fund Public schools to the level needed to keep up with inflation.

Name: Kathryn Cox

Comment: As a Ph.D./J.D. with all of my education in public schools, I beg you, please don't. My kids' rural public school, of which I have the highest regard, will be harmed by this bill. If parents want to send their children to private school, I am completely in favor; but not at the expense of my tax dollars and local public schools. Private schools will raise tuition to the point where this will only benefit families with children who don't need special education that can currently afford private schools. I fall into this group but I do not wish to send my children to private school. I want to raise all boats. My children get a good education at the local public school and I do not wish for my town to suffer because the school and students are suffering.

Name: Molly Dunlap

Comment: Public dollars for public schools only

Name: Sean Cully

Comment: I am very excited about this bill. To allow every family the opportunity to take their hard earned dollars to a private school is a great idea. I would prefer my kids stay in public schools, but with the continual attack we keep seeing against the nuclear family from the Marxist left, we may have no choice but to leave and this helps us so much. Thank you!

Name: Wendy Cronan

Comment: School choice already exists in the form of open enrollment. While I certainly understand that some families prefer private schools, for a variety of reasons, I don't believe public funds should pay their tuition. Federal law requires FAPE. State law requires things of our public schools that it does not require of private schools. Unless private schools are going to be bound by ALL of the same rules as our public schools then our state, public funds need to stay with our public schools.

Name: Yelena Meier

Comment: I support this bill. I think that special needs children should get more funds available to them to move to private schools, so more private schools would be able to build staff and procure tools necessary to support them as they have this extra resources in public schools. We need to end monopoly in education in our state and make it more competitive. There are states that spend less and perform better academically. We need to prepare Iowans to compete for better college placements and job opportunities. We need to prepare Americans to compete with the rest of the world. Schools in Iowa became complacent and some children were hijacked by some school boards and were stopped being educated all together during pandemic. I was discouraged to hear that we couldnt continue to educate 10000 children in the district because 50 of them dont have access to Internet during pandemic. This was just intentional damage to our economy and our children and needs to stop.

Name: Bonnie Stalzer

Comment: Public funds are for public schools, period! Parents have and make their own choices to send their children to private schools for many different reasons. Lower student to teacher ratio, the curriculum being taught, the demographics of the students attending, the demographics of the staff to name a few. The choice is theirs. Public funds if used should hold EVERY school then accountable to Federal and State Laws governing Labor and Discrimination Laws. No other directive should be acceptable. I have no children in school at this time but my taxes pay for the schools my grandchildren go to and if One Dollar is taken from their education they will have to suffer those consequences. Why are we continuing to create a world that offers less for our future generations than what we have had. Shame on ALL who try to steer this State in that direction.

Name: Tiffany Welch

Comment: I oppose this bill, as public tax payer dollars should be used for public schools, where there is accountability. Taking tax money away from public schools takes away the choice of a quality public education, defeating the stated purpose of school choice bills. Diverting away tax money from public schools hurts all students and hurt communities, and hurts the future workforce of the state with a lesseducated population.

Name: Heather Sly

Comment: This state was number one in schools not so long ago. Public money for public schools. If you put more money into the public schools, they wouldnt be failing so many children. If you cared for children as much as you claim (see: abortion bills, ignorant trans bathroom bills that are unneeded) then this shouldnt be a difficult decision. Private schools have their own scholarship offers if they need more students. And when you steal all the public money for private schools, the ones left behind in public schools fail. THESE are the students that will be voting soon

Name: Allison Barlow

Comment: Public funds should be used for public schools. School choice does exist in that a family can choose to open enroll their children in a district that they feel best suites their needs. Public schools play an integral role in supporting the vast majority of Iowas students. Without them properly funded, their abilities to serve all children will

be hindered. Decisions should not be made based on what some consider to be best for the minority. This is the antithesis of how our countrys legislative structure is designed to support the will of the majority of the people. Supporting this legislation is insulting to public school teachers past and present, and demonstrates a lack of reverence and support for one of our most precious systems designed to create educated and wellrounded citizens for the betterment of society holistically.

Name: Jill Neas

Comment: As a veteran educator of 20 years, a product of Iowas public schools, and mother of 4 currently in a public school I feel that the goal of this state should be to continue to work to ensure that all children have access to great public schools. The proposed voucher plan will not help those who are currently in public schools as they will not cover the full cost of attendance at a private school. Additionally, this plan will strip the public schools of funds needed to continue to provide services for all children. At this time private schools do not have to accept all students, and are able to remove a student at any time, for any reason. This will lead to more upheaval in tve education of children. Im also concerned about students having access to lunch at school as private schools do not participate in the free and reduced lunch programs, which are vital to providing for many students. Also, private schools are not held to the same standards as public schools, nor do they have publicly elected oversight of a school board. How do we as taxpayers know that students are learning, and growing without this oversight?I could go on, and on, but will leave you with the reminder that our public schools are our future, and this bill would be detrimental to the future of Iowa. Thank you for your time. Jill Neas, Urbandale

Name: Sonia Schumacher

Comment: I am in favor of educational savings account. As a taxpayer in Iowa I feel like it should only be right that our tax dollars follow the needs of our family and children.I feel strongly about this especially now in the last few years with the critical race theory and SEL being taught in schoolWhen I was a teacher we focused on reading, writing and math and now its all about the pronouns. I want to support the wonderful educators that work tirelessly for our children. I can understand where they feel like if they lose funding it will affect their jobs. If they focused on the core reading, writing,and math and not this other crud then we wouldn't be in this spot.

Name: Fran Henderson

Comment: Public education is one of the foundations of our country. Public schools must take all children. Private schools discriminate by being able to select which students they will accept. Tax payer dollars should not be used for private schools. Last but not least, private schools should be held to the same standards as public schools.

Name: Amanda McClanahan

Comment: I strongly support school choice and ESAs. Given the current state of our public schools where there is a strong push for agendas to be taught rather than education, many parents arent being given a choice at all. Pulling my kids from public education has been a sacrifice. We are tapping into our childrens college education plan to pay for an education that is not full of political agendas. ESAs would simply provide parents a choice in how to utilize their own tax dollars. The majority of tax dollars would still provide public schools with the majority of funding. ESAs would simply provide an equitable means for parents who might not normally be able to afford a private education for their children. Given the state of public education in Iowa schools, and educators openly thwarting laws surrounding critical race theory, the lack of transparency between parents and educators, and the push for the educators to hold more authority over a child than their own parents, I hope you understand how critical it is for those of us who have exhausted all of our options with the need for transparency inside the schools and petitioning our legislators for change. Public schools still get 100% of all federal funding, all local tax dollars from people who dont even have children in the school system anymore. All this does is provide a way

for parents who want a choice, to have a choice. For parents to utilize their own money they've paid into the system for years, to benefit their children. Please understand, we have been petitioning you for school choice for well over a year. You now hold the majority after we entrusted you with our vote. Please do the right thing by your constituents and give us a choice.

Name: Angela Schwinger

Comment: In America, we as parents, have freedoms to choose how we raise and teach our children. Who influences them and when. Unless that is taken away we should also be able to receive the funding for the school of our choice to further our freedoms mentioned above. If the state is concerned about losing money for public schools maybe they should improve the school systems not control people. Set some standards. They only reason people choose a private school are mainly because the standards they hold.

Name: Sandra Mason

Comment: NO! No! No! To the School Choice Bill!!!! Parents can already send their child to the school of their choice. This bill will absolutely be the death of small schools!! Listen to what people are saying!! Most do NOT want this bill to become what Iowa education is all about. Let's spend the funds on existing schools who offer quality education to our students. PLEASE DO NOT PASS THIS BILL!!!

Name: Jodi Linley Smith

Comment: Privatizing compulsory education with public money is a disastrous proposal. Iowa public school educators and leaders bear the responsibility of educating all Iowa children, and they deserve more funding, not less, to do their jobs.

Name: Samantha McClelland

Comment: Im about to be public school parent for my son who starts kindergarten next fall. I ask that you please vote NO to vouchers. Public schools cannot continue to be drained of their resources. They are responsible to meet the needs of all students, regardless of socioeconomic circumstances and disabilities. Private schools do not have the same accountability for who or what they teach and therefore should not receive government funding. Public money belongs in public schools.

Name: Emily Plummer

Comment: I oppose this bill. Public funds should not be used for private schools. Public schools should be receiving more funding, not less, to support the dedicated teachers and provide students with the tools they need to succeed.

Name: Derek Trobaugh

Comment: I write in strong opposition to this bill. Public money belongs in public schools. I really fear for the health of our rural Iowa public schools if this bill passes. (This includes the rural school in Sac County that I grew up attending.)

Name: Michael Franken

Comment: All you people understand why this is happening right? Large public schools influenced by politicians and teachers unions absolutely railroaded students and families with mitigation last 3 years. While small and private schools were constantly demonstrating none of this damaging crap always necessary. But mitigation continued so more emergency money could be handed to public education, and unions which is then laundered back into one sided politics. Chickens coming home to roost. Parents are rightfully pissed

Name: Grant Elsbernd

Comment: I dont want my taxes going to schools that dont serve all students. Private schools get to pick and choose their students. This bill is student choice for the schools, not

school choice for the students. Public money is for public schools. Do not advance this unpopular bill, and stop using out of state money to push for this voucher scheme

Name: Corrie Richards

Comment: Please keep public funds for public schools. We need the money now more than ever.

Name: Jena Raridon

Comment: Please support this bill. Public schools will not be defunded by school choice! SSA funds sit unspent in the state general fund and parents would be able to use these funds for their school of choice. Proficiency rates in the public schools are plummeting and parents should have this support to move their child to a school that will best educate their child.

Name: Elizabeth Peterson

Comment: I am in opposition to this bill for the following reasons. I do not support spending money earmarked for public schools on private schools that are not held to the same standards as public schools. Private schools do not provide an equitable education to students with disabilities and can actively discriminate against students based on their religion, gender, and race or ethnicity. I also do not agree with the language in the bill that allows for transfer of ESA funding to the general fund should a student not use it for either public or private schools. That further punishes public schools at a time when they need MORE funding, not less. And, I am against the portion that seems to reward schools for not spending money on teacher development or gifted programming by allowing them to spend it on teacher salaries. Teacher salaries should not be tied to this bill at all, and schools should not be forced to choose between paying teachers and providing quality education options. I want to be clear I am not against making private schools more accessible in theory. I am against defunding public schools to do so.

Name: Garry Klein

Comment: As a product of public education and an Iowa taxpayer, I deeply object to appropriating monies to private schools. Iowa public schools are already underperforming due to a lack of resources and further erosion of funds or diversion of funds only serves to hurt Iowa's school children more. As a legislature that has promised to be conservative in how monies are spent, it is best to put taxes where the most can benefit and that is in our public schools. This does not remove Freedom of choice for parents, but does trust basic economics principles about scales of economy with regard to school funding.

Name: Jessica McDonald

Comment: I do NOT support this bill. Public taxpayer money should NOT fund private schools.

Name: Steven Schappaugh

Comment: Please vote no. Iowans don't want it. Rural and urban schools will be negatively impacted. Choice is propaganda and parents don't all have access to choice if their children have needs private schools aren't required to meet. We keep doing more with less. It's not sustainable.

Name: Joe Stutting

Comment: If the committee is supportive of this bill, I would encourage you to look at the lack of transparency that the private schools will have regarding who will be receiving this state money. I would also encourage you to consider the roadblocks that exist that will keep this program from being accessed by all students. For example, the private schools are not required to accept all students or provide the education all students may need. I do support flexibility from the state, but it is not wise to pay

teacher salaries out of a fund balance. This would not be fiscally sound. I encourage you to take the time to research the impacts of this bill and understand its entire impact including the fiscal impact on the state of Iowa.

Name: Kim Inskeep

Comment: Please vote no on the school voucher bill. Our public schools are already suffering from low funding. They cannot suffer further.

Name: Melissa Rogers

Comment: I fear that the money is not only being used for families that can already afford private education, but we're also doing it to the detriment of those who are already underserved whether students receiving special ed services, students who are Black/Indigenous/People of Color, or rural school students. Also, the small number of students it could actually serve is incredibly small, so why have \$106 million dollars allocated for it? We used to be first in education and now our state makes decisions based on special interest of those lining their pockets. We are already seeing a teacher shortage how many more qualified teachers will leave the state or education in general because of this? Why can't we fully fund EVERYONE'S education? Public dollars belong to public schools. Parents already have access to curriculum, faculty, and decisions they aren't necessarily using those resources. We're supposed to work together, but we can't when they're too busy demonizing teachers to listen.

Name: Lauren Wheeler

Comment: Our schools r under funded and its completely unthinkable that the governor thinks public vouchers is a good thing. fund public schools. Rural schools will suffer. Public dollar r not for funding religious schools. Our state was once proud of our education system, lets provide more money for public schools so we can be proud again.

Name: Sara Arnold

Comment: As a parent of three daughters in a rural public school and a graduate of a public school, I strongly oppose the voucher bill. Public schools are required to met the needs of ALL of their students. They do not get to choose who they educate. They also are held to more rigorous testing standards, which private schools are not. If tax money is used to fund both, then the playing field by which they are required to operate and educate needs to be the same. You cannot hold them to separate standards if this voucher system goes into place and I do not think the governor will address this HUGE discrepancy. If the intent of the bill is to truly allow parents a choice in what schools their children attend, give them the choice of properly funded public schools. Take pride in Iowas public school system and support it. Iowa children deserve support from their representatives and our governor by properly funding their education and supporting educators.

Name: Kristina Ahnemann Ridgely

Comment: I am commenting as a constituent to which you are representing. I am opposed to any legislation that would use public money for private school choice. I am not opposed to private schools per se, only what I see as a misappropriation of public dollars. I believe parents should have the choice to enroll their children in private schools, but not at the cost of our public educational system, which is what this proposal would do. This proposed piece of legislation endangers the balance of educational equity in our state and would only further marginalize the demographics within our state. I'd highly recommend reading "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" before voting. If this is passed, I'd quite honestly be embarrassed and ashamed to be part of a state that didn't recognize or support the importance of public education.

Name: Todd Munnik

Comment: Moving public dollars to private schools will not benefit Iowa's schools but only a

few students with access to private schools. Our public schools should be the focus of the State of Iowa.

Name: Linda Pitt

Comment: Public money for public schools. Separation of government and religion. The voucher money is mainly going to religion backed education. This is going to undermine our good public schools. Schools have been under funded in Iowa for years. The national rating of Iowa schools used to be top rated, not any longer under Republican rule. Outside interests are pushing this. Stop school vouchers.

Name: Juliann Ahrens

Comment: Please....please...NO VOUCHERS! Why is this being pushed immediately? Yes...I can guess why...but it is a horrible idea. What means does the state have to follow the vouchers into those who want them...and to insure they would be used for a school? There is NO planning being done...except to satisfy the governor's wish to have the school her daughter works with be funded by state monies. What is there are 34 students in a household that will be funded with vouchers? Look at that amount of money.All of this is being taken from public education...that is working hard to build up from what was learned during the pandemic when we weren't allow to have in house school. Public education IS getting better....but we need the monies to hire teachers...more teachers to make sure classes are being worked with on a "grade alignment" basis....not have oversized classes, etc. PLEASE....NO VOUCHERS!!! NONE!

Name: Diana Boeglin

Comment: this is a bad idea. it will benefit only wealthy families who can already afford private schools, and take money away from rural schools already struggling. this will destroy what is left of our reputation for excellence in our public schools. just find public schools!

Name: Brian Schurz

Comment: This proposed bill thats trying to be rushed thru reminds me of how the healthcare bill was handled at a national level in 2010. We need to pass it and then can read it. Today the Republicans in charge want this passed and ready to sign on the Governors desk without giving the people of Iowa to ask questions and meet with our local legislators. The students in Iowa who have limited economic means, lack of transportation, and may require more support at school wont benefit from this bill. However, if you come from an affluent family in an area where your 3 children go to private schoolyou are excited with this bill, since the income restrictions have been lifted. This bill will do nothing to help all students and families in Iowa. I challenge each member of the Senate and House to go to schools and meet with teachers and administration and ask what they need.

Name: Linda R. Jones

Comment: I strongly disagree with this use of my tax dollars. Using Iowa residents tax money to assist a very small number of students across the state who already have the right to choose to attend a private school is simply wrong. This is an example of minority rule! My tax dollars need to be spent to strengthen public schools in Iowa which used to be ranked at the top or near the top consistently. As state funding of public schools in Iowa has continued to decrease so have the rankings. Teacher salaries for public schools should be boosted & collective bargaining needs to be reinstated. Teacher shortages are becoming a major problem which contributes to lower quality schools. Please use Iowans tax dollars appropriately to benefit the majority! Thank you.

Name: Lisa Mellecker

Comment: School vouchers siphon money out of public schools that they desperately need. This will harm all public schools, but will be especially devastating to rural schools. All

we need to do is look at the state of private healthcare access in our rural communities to see what's to come. When the motive is profit and not a shared commodity people lose. There is also no studies or data to back up this bill. There is no reason to believe this will increase the academic achievement or opportunities for Iowa's children, because it has never worked in any other state that has tried it. Iowa used to be a beacon of public education and we can do it again, but not if schools are consistently underfunded and undervalued by our state government. VOTE NO ON VOUCHERS.

Name: Margaret Kinsman

Comment: Please stop this attack on our public schools.

Name: Susan Cook

Comment: Implementing school vouchers is a risky move for Iowa. Instead, investing in proven programs such as universal access to early childhood education, higher pay for teachers, and smaller class sizes would be a more responsible approach to improving Iowa's schools and ensuring the success and wellbeing of our children. There is not any clear evidence that vouchers help students from high quality research designs. It is more likely that vouchers have negative effects on students who use vouchers to attend private schools (<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED568255>) and that they have longer term negative effects on performance in public schools (<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1306686>). Even if vouchers did not impact students and school systems, they are not fiscally responsible. It is costly to implement voucher systems, and there are hidden administrative costs (e.g. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/petergreene/2021/10/05/thecostofnewhampshireschoolvoucherprogramismushrooming/>). Strong public schools are the bedrock of our communities and the foundation of what makes Iowa a great state. We should not risk the future of our children to an unproven and unnecessary program that will likely be much more costly than anticipated. There are other things that we can do that we know will help schools. Universal access to early childhood education (<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ889144>), higher pay for teachers (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0047272713002119>), and smaller class sizes (<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2006.105478>) have all been shown to benefit students. The responsible thing to do is to invest our money in programs that are proven to work.

Name: Carrie Wright

Comment: I support this bill. Parents should have a choice where and how they want their children educated. This is not public money. There is no such thing as public money, it all comes from taxpayers. The education received Iowa schools used to be something to be proud of and it no longer is and it's not for a lack of funding. I would argue it's overfunded and the bulk of it is bloated administrative departments in schools. Since we are no longer receiving a quality product with our tax dollars, change is needed and that is why I support this bill.

Name: Chelsea Smith

Comment: As someone who was educated for 12 years through Catholic education, I absolutely do NOT support this bill. Choosing to send your kids to a private school is a CHOICE and should not be tax incentivized. Also this measure will dived and hurt the rural communities of Iowa even more.

Name: Mary Kate Pilcher Hayek

Comment: Iowans will suffer because vouchers will actually eliminate school choice. Ultimately, they will gut our public education system. In most of Iowa, public schools are the only choice. They are the focal point of small and large communities. The proposed legislation will create parallel education systems, one private and unregulated, created to attract a certain demographic (i.e. Christian), the other, public and

regulated, left underfunded, to serve everyone else. Vouchers will create a socioeconomically and racially segregated school system. Iowa used to be better than this. Please vote NO.

Name: Stuart Davidson

Comment: I am a retired teacher. Having served in a small school district I understand the critical needs of our public education system. I am asking you to NOT support public tax dollars being used for Private Schools. The School Districts in Iowa can not afford this shift of public tax support away from our education needs. This is not a matter of Parent Choice, it will be the private schools that determine who they accept to enroll. Special needs students will not have the option of attending schools that will not provide services. Are you going to hold private schools to the same standards, reporting and guidelines that public school districts must meet? Don't rush this legislation through when so many citizens of Iowa are against it. I do not support public tax dollars used for private school tuition. Thank you for your time.

Name: Mary Kate Pilcher Hayek

Comment: Iowans will suffer because vouchers will actually eliminate school choice. Ultimately, they will gut our public education system. In most of Iowa, public schools are the only choice. They are the focal point of small and large communities. The proposed legislation will create parallel education systems, one private and unregulated, created to attract a certain demographic (i.e. Christian), the other, public and regulated, left underfunded, to serve everyone else. Vouchers will create a socioeconomically and racially segregated school system. Iowa used to be better than this. Please vote NO.

Name: Paul Wermers

Comment: I do not support the Students First Act I do support the "2022 Iowa Republican Platform" section of "Fiscal Responsibility is a fundamental function of any local, state or federal entity." Taxpayer public dollars belong in public schools for the benefit of all Iowa citizens. Sending taxpayer's dollars to private schools is not being fiscal responsibly.

Name: Jennifer Allen

Comment: Strongly OPPOSE SSB 1022. This bill will steal taxpayer money from Iowa's children to offer handouts to wealthy families whose children are already in private school. Private schools get to pick and choose which students they serve. They are not required to provide for children with special needs, as our public schools are. This bill would, by definition, discriminate against these special needs students. Private schools have no accountability to the taxpayers. They have no elected boards, and their finances are opaque to the public. Iowans deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent! Worse than all this, though, is what this scheme will do Iowa's rural schools. These schools, vitally important to their communities, will be quickly decimated by the loss of funding. School closings and consolidations will follow. Children will have to travel greater distances to school, and families will leave their communities to avoid this. The destruction of Iowa's small towns will continue. Please, demonstrate your commitment to ALL of Iowa's children by opposing this harmful bill and fully funding their public schools.

Name: David Perrott

Comment: Top tier education for children must be a priority across the state. That means that the monopoly held by public schools must have competition. Public educators and administrators will say that the answer is more money, but there are clear examples that higher funding does not necessarily produce better results. Public funding is just tax money confiscated from parents. The path forward is competition and parental direction of funds towards the schools that provide the best education. Competition drives results. Let the schools compete!

Name: Steven Inskeep

Comment: As a former member and President of my local school board, I know firsthand that this legislation will harm public schools. Community schools have struggled for years as appropriations from the State of Iowa have not kept up with the increased costs that the public schools face. This legislation will only add to their struggles. Rural districts, which are the majority of districts in Iowa, will be impacted the most. Every dollar is important to them. They need more funding, not less, to provide a world class education for our youth. A world class education is what the State of Iowa used to provide, but not anymore, due to past funding shortfalls. This bill will only make things worse. I strongly urge you to oppose this bill, for the sake of the vast majority of students in this state. Thank you.

Name: Kristin Sullivan

Comment: Its ridiculous to offer public money to private institutions who are not bound to the same obligations to serve students. I am a product of a small school and I know how critical it is for a small town to have a good school. My kids now attend public school in Iowa. You must not pass this terrible bill!

Name: Mandy Gilbert

Comment: Parents know more about their childrens needs in finding the best educational model for them to learn.. The parent ultimately should be able to decide whether homeschooling, tutoring, public or private education is best conducive to learning. Some public schools are too big, others cant address individualized plans adequately, while others want to push an agenda that is against family values taught at home. Children should not feel they have to check their values at the door of any school. ESAs are putting the experts, parents, back in charge of education. Thankful the Iowa legislature recognizes the importance of addressing all childrens needs in education. This is what inclusion and academic success looks like.

Name: Angela Wenell

Comment: My three children all attended public school. I love public schools and want them to succeed, but the status quo is not working. The incentives for success are broken, and accountability is lacking. Private schools are seeing far more success in every measure with a smaller price tag. School choice will give the disadvantaged the resources to find the education the best fits their children and force public schools to compete for funding. This places the accountability for schools where it should be, in the hands of parents and not the inadequate red tape of government.

Name: Margaet Nixon

Comment: As a parent and tax paying citizen of Iowa, the funds we are levied must be used for education PERIOD. School choice will make the whole system more accountable and eventually more competitive regardless of the venue. I am VERY SUPPORTIVE of this bill.

Name: Nancy Davin

Comment: I remember not long ago when Iowa was highly regarded at the top of the public education and achievement lists. Repeated legislatures have gutted public and higher education in this state in a race to the bottom. Iowans dont deserve this. They deserve to have their taxes support public education and not help finance private schools. This life long Iowan begs all legislators not to support this measure. Its time to support public and higher education.

Name: Susan Corbin-Muir

Comment: Iowa cannot afford to lose public schools. Our childrens futures depend on strong public schools. Our communities are built on strong public schools. Vote no on this attack on public schools.

Name: Amy Saylor

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill. I want to know how the governor and state legislators pushing this bill that Iowans clearly do not want will ensure that private schools do not discriminate against children with disabilities. Will these private schools be required to take children with IEPs or who do not succeed in public schools? If not, public money should NOT be used in this way. Fully fund public schools to set them up for success. Please listen to your constituents since it is very clear if you opened your ears that the majority of people in Iowa DO NOT want this legislation.

Name: Elizabeth Andersen

Comment: I implore you to work to keep PUBLIC money in PUBLIC schools. This should not be a partisan issue strong public schools benefit ALL in our state. While I believe that there is a place for private education and appreciate the opportunity parents have to choose what's best for their families, I firmly feel that our tax dollars should not be used to fund these schools. Private schools have extremely limited government oversight and no responsibility to actually provide an education to every student. As a parent that has been involved in my students public education from serving on PTO, participating in booster organizations, and being engaged on what's happening within our district via school board meetings, I see how severely underfunded our public schools are at this point in time especially in rapidly growing districts like ours. Please listen to your constituents, who, in reading through the public comments, appear to overwhelmingly oppose SSB 1022. This bill would benefit only a small portion of the population, while having detrimental consequences to the majority. Support our public schools, which work hard with the limited funds they have, to provide access to a quality education to ALL children in Iowa.

Name: Jennifer Briggs

Comment: My family & I fully support this bill and if nothing else, it could/should be stronger. I expect it to be easy to at minimum, pass what's been proposed. It is abhorrent, to make a law that every child must be educated but then force the majority of children to get that education by only the government/public school. I pay taxes on the money I earn, agreeing that part will be going to the state to pay for the education of each individual child. So why then, are children not allowed to use their allotted amount of tax dollars to seek the education that best fits their needs to thrive? Why does it HAVE to be public school or be well off enough to pay for alternatives on your own? In addition, in this current bill, School choice will NOT defund public schools. This bill does NOT change what happens financially to a public school district when a parent chooses to instead enroll their child in private or alternative schooling. Why? Because with or without the School Choice bill, the district does NOT receive the SSA funds for private school students. This would insinuate that the real reason for Backlash against this bill is due to fear that if parents had a choice, some would choose alternatives to public school which would hinder enrollment numbers. This feels a bit communistic to force children through only one government funded educational system and say our tax dollars can only fund the student if they choose the government public school system. If they don't want the government funded education, then the state just keeps it. Why? We fund more \$ per student than many states while still having worse outcomes. The issue is not funding. The issue is control. And that's not what Iowa is supposed to be about. This bill needs to easily pass.

Name: Randy Kopecky

Comment: 59 year old retiree here and have no school age kids or grandkids. This plan to take tax dollars from our public schools will continue to weaken the public schools I grew up in. It will also be a huge benefit to those who really do not need the help and direct funds that should be going to improving public education. Last it's going to long term hurt, maybe fatally, our rural schools and communities. This bill should not advance and is not favored by the majority of Iowans.

Name: Blaise Boles

Comment: Public money should be used for public schools. Private schools are not held to the same accountability, can discriminate (my son with an IEP can be denied admission), and can teach nonsense (young earth, creationism). Please please please do not support this voucher plan. It will further weaken what used to be a point of pride in Iowa public education.

Name: Patricia Benson

Comment: Public money should support public schools which are held to a set of mandated, accountable standards whereas private schools by their very nature are not. Private schools will still choose who to accept, vouchers or not, and can deny admission to anyone they choose. We have sent children to both private and public schools and found public schools to offer greater varieties of opportunities and broader, more diverse academic options. For children who require special education services, many private schools simply do not provide these. The voucher program does not offer full funding for a child to attend private school, only a set amount, and many families lack the funds to cover the additional costs, including transportation (which public schools provide free of charge). We currently have parental choice in where to send our children to school, so vouchers are unnecessary and take away money that public schools need to meet their ability to provide a free appropriate education for all types of learners. The state of Iowa used to be among the nation's best in the area of education. We have fallen further and further behind as state funding for public schools has decreased and not kept up with current costs. Iowa has not adequately funded public education for years. The symbol Iowa chose as representative of itself for the state quarter program years ago was a rural public schoolhouse. Let's get back to supporting our great public schools & teachers & collegiate teacher education programs and forget this detrimental voucher concept.

Name: Kristen Erickson

Comment: I am appalled that this proposal to provide public tax dollars to fund private schools is back for consideration, and now even more of a threat to the state of Iowa than it was before. I am a parent of a middle school student and a high school student. My spouse and I are originally from Illinois. One of the reasons we were proud to move to Iowa 25 years ago was the positive reputation it had for public education. Today I would not recommend anyone move to Iowa for its education, and bills like this are a major part of the reason why. We should be using public tax dollars to fund and improve our public schools, not to enrich private and forprofit entities that benefit only a small fraction of Iowans and are not subject to the same oversight and regulation as public schools. This is a bill that will disproportionately harm rural counties where there are few private schools, and help urban counties and affluent families that already have many options for schooling. It is bad for the state of Iowa and its citizens.

Name: Megan Smith

Comment: The overwhelming majority of this state is against the scheme to defund public schools by transferring money from public education funds to private, forprofit education corporations. You, the elected politicians, need to listen to your constituents and vote down this sham. States who have moved to this model have seen worse educational outcomes for the children who attended private school due to lack of certification requirements, regulations and oversight. The students still attending public schools also receive a lower quality education as vital resources are transferred away to already wealthy families and the corporations who stand to profit from the potential gold mine that is private education. This governor and legislature should be ashamed of themselves for systematically starving public schools, then decrying their performance as a means to bolster their argument for private schools. The goal here is to destroy public education and the people of Iowa DO NOT WANT THIS. If you believe in representative democracy, rather than pleasing our state's

leader, then let this bill die in committee where it belongs, it is not fit to find its way to the floor and it is not fit for the State of Iowa.

Name: Terese Grant

Comment: This bill is wrong for public schools in Iowa and I encourage all to vote No. Schools have been underfunded for many years. This has created a teacher shortage and cuts in many programs in schools throughout Iowa and has contributed to larger classes. In spite of these financial burdens, our schools continue to educate students in creative ways in order to help them all succeed. If vouchers are passed, many rural schools will be forced to consolidate which will have a very negative impact on many rural communities and on Iowas economy overall. There is also the issue of accountability. Private schools do not follow the same rules and regulations as public schools. Public schools are responsible for the education of all students regardless of race, religion, gender, disability, or socioeconomic status. Private schools get to choose the students they admit, not the parents.

Name: Leslie Wilson

Comment: I totally disagree with the need for voucher option provided in this bill. Public dollars should stay in public schools. This bill is designed to subsidize wealthy individuals who have decided they want their children to attend a private school frequently for reasons that do not have anything to do with the quality of the public school education. We should not use taxpayer money to support private schools that can determine who can and cannot attend their schools and have zero accountability for the tax dollars they indirectly receive. (That accountability is true for the tax dollars that go to private colleges in this state as well.)When I moved to Iowa, Iowa was annually ranked as one of the top three states in the nation for public education. We have lost that ranking. Why? Long and significant underfunding of public education, lack of preparation for increasing diversity in the state, including socioeconomic diversity, AND accountability measures that do nothing to improve the education of our students. This bill only serves to move public dollars into private schools where there is no longer any accountability and no longer a requirement to educate ALL students. I have five children. They have all left the state after being educated in our BOR schools due to significant lack of financial opportunity including 3 who are doctors and 1 who is a nurse. They have no desire to return because what used to be a state with a strong education system providing some compensation for the lower salaries paid in Iowa, is no longer the case. This bill is a result of a state that is no longer welcoming to people from many different cultures, identities, and races. This state has lost its way.

Name: Oliver Bardwell

Comment: WE ARE FOR SCHOOL CHOICE. Iowa Public Education has changed drastically in recent years and children and parents are being held captive to their school districts. With the adoption of CASEL as the gold standard by the IDOE and the infiltration of CRT and Gender Ideology, our schools have become Social and Emotional Learning camps. Academics have been pushed aside in lieu of creating social justice activists. The curriculum and educational materials have become politicized and socialized. This all needs to change. We need to get Back to the Basics in education in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Education needs completely reorganized. With over 75 percent of the positions at the IDOE being federally funded it has become a woke marking organization. Our schools are becoming indoctrination camps. Until this allchanges, parents need options. ESAs will allow parents the option to send their kids to the best schools. Schools with Iowa values.

Name: Warren Varley

Comment: I oppose this bill.It is a fundamental error to assume that the only person benefiting from a public school education is the student him or herself. All Iowans benefit from a welleducated workforce and citizenry. It is what allowed us to excel in science, technology & industry vis a vie the rest of the world. It is therefore a mistake to tie

school funding to individual students. Obviously it costs more to educate some students than others and there are fixed costs to school districts that are independent of enrollment. We must first fully fund public education from preK through community college and regent institutions. If, after doing that, the legislature wants to level the playing field for poor families by subsidizing private education based upon means, that is fine (not great, but fine). However, to subsidize wealthy families who do not want to support public education is an abomination that will turn every state that follows that course into an uneconomical bananarepublic with a thin layer of very rich and an unproductive, underserved, exploited working class. This measure on its face is an effort to divert public education funding into forprofit enterprises for the enrichment of their investors. Public education funding should not follow the student; it should follow the best interests of all the people of Iowa, including future generations. This bill will destroy that and do irreparable harm to an education system that has been a model for the world. Please fully fund public education and oppose this bill.

Name: Ann Duchow

Comment: I do not support this bill. State education money should be use for the students in public schools, not for schools who will keep students out. Private schools do not have facilities for special needs students, for example, and diverting monies from public schools further dilutes the ability to educate public school students. Listen to the people, and stop applying harmful policies to Iowa!

Name: Nick Andersen

Comment: There has not been a time where funding for public schools is needed more. As such, our legislators want to drive a decision to make that worse. Its clear this decision is going to be rammed through without any public feedback considered, so I ask you to please offset the money you are giving to the wealthy families to pay for their private, religious school funding and take the same amount and provide that back to public schools and teachers so they can afford quality education for our youth. Public schools deserve public funding that ALL tax payers are providing. Thank you.

Name: Lauren Probst

Comment: I am so disheartened by this idea of school vouchers. As students of private schools, my husband and I whole heartedly stand against these vouchers. To take these funds from already ailing public schools is shameful. Our schools used to be among the best in the nation, and now, as a mother to a 3 and 1 year old, I have to say I am nervous about the educational world they will be entering, especially if dollars are taken from the public schools they and their generation of Iowans will attend. Please vote no to school vouchers and keep public school dollars public.

Name: Kristin Lee

Comment: This plan is so bad Reynolds had to primary members of her own party because even they could admit that taking money away from already underfunded public schools is simply a bad idea.

Name: Betsy Mitchell

Comment: When we moved our young family to Iowa twelve years ago we enlisted the research help of my mother before buying a home. As a longtime, elected school board member of a large district in Florida she was a resource in helping us analyze the overall performance and school districts in Iowas education system. Her findings were surprise and admiration at the robust strength and performance of the states public school system and comfort with us choosing any district in the area we were planning to live. For many years, Iowa boasted a long, proud history of being a national leader in education. Currently, Iowa parents have multiple options for school choice including: in district transfer, districttodistrict public school open enrollment, charter schools, strong nonpublic schools, home school options and publicly funded School Tuition Organization tax credits. Parents have the choice to enroll their child

in a private or religious school, but they should not take public taxpayer funds. Our investment as a public should be used to support public schools which serve ALL students regardless of race, religion, gender, socioeconomic status and disability. A strong public school system is the backbone of a healthy state. Please do not handicap our public schools with a failed system that has crippled public schools in other states. NO to vouchers.

Name: Ann Garton

Comment: I oppose this bill. Evidence shows that: Vouchers abandon public schools and drain away critical dollars. Vouchers impact public accountability. Vouchers leave behind many students, including the most vulnerable. Vouchers leave behind many disadvantaged students because private schools may not accept them or do not offer the special services they need. Vouchers do not cover the full cost of private schools leaving many still not able to have the choice the program suggests. Public dollars must support public schools and the barriers they face in educating the children of this state.

Name: Shelley Skuster

Comment: Public money belongs in public schools. Selling a voucher or so-called "scholarship" program under the guises of "freedom of choice" and "equality" and "access to a good private education" is deceiving. 75% of Iowa communities do not have access to a private school. Public schools are the great equalizer. They welcome everyone from all incomes, languages, learning differences and backgrounds. The same is not true for private schools.

Name: Tiffany Westerly

Comment: Strongly oppose. Parents that want private schools can pay for it themselves. We sent our 4 year old to private preschool because at the time, it was the best option for our family schedule. I can't even wrap my brain around asking taxpayers to pay for that when free preschool was offered at our elementary school. We made the choice, we paid the \$900/month. That is exactly how it should work. Other programs in which taxpayer money is used with private companies have rules, oversight, auditing, etc. If these companies want government money, they need to play by the same rules. Of course they'd never agree to that because they know they'd lose money. Private schools don't have to help students with special needs. What other government program allows people to openly discriminate?!?! And, then they boast about higher test scores. Public schools that serve all students including those with learning disabilities, nonnative English speaking students, and other special needs. Private schools turn those students down or if they've already enrolled, they tell the parents Sorry we don't have services for your student. I volunteer regularly in our school and within our district. I'm on the PTO board, School Improvement Advisory Committee, DEI Audit Work Group/Parent Committee and several other nonschool local parent groups. I'm in our schools frequently and very familiar with what goes on. It's exhausting for our administrators and teachers to constantly deal with parents complaining about problems that don't exist. Also legislators please stop using statistics from your lobbyist. Iowans know better. Of course people will view favorably or somewhat favorably an idea when you ask the questions in a manner in which you leave out important details like discrimination and lack of transparency. Our kids deserve so much better.

Name: Jeff Westhoff

Comment: This bill is a great bill that will have a positive impact on so many. We should fund ALL student and give parents choices because each and every student is different. Fund STUDENTS rather than systems. This is not about one system vs another. It is about funding all students so they can get the best education for their personal situation.

Name: LADONNA DEAVERS

Comment: It is very sad that instead of supporting our schools, you are finding new ways to take the little funding we do have in our schools away. PLEASE DO NOT SUPPORT THIS VOUCHER SYSTEM!!! You are defunding our schools when you do!LaDonna Deavers

Name: Emily Weaver

Comment: I am strongly opposed to SSB 1022. I am the mother of a 5th grader who attends school in a small, rural district. Iowa parents already have a choice in the type of education their children receive. If legislators believe that Iowa's public schools are not meeting parents' needs, then their responsibility is to make improvements to Iowa's public schools, not to subsidize private education. The passage of SSB 1022 will strip valuable resources away from Iowa's most vulnerable learners. Iowans do not want public funds to go to private schools.

Name: Jennifer Tompkins

Comment: I live in rural Iowa. Like many of us still living and working in rural Iowa, the only option for schools are public schools. Private schools aren't in small rural communities, this bill does nothing for the thousands of Iowa public school students whose only local option is public school. As I see it, this bill will only give wealthy Iowans in urban/suburban areas a tax payer funded break on tuition for their kids to attend private schools on my tax dollars. No, that is not acceptable.

Name: Ann Hart

Comment: Public money is for public schools and public accountability. Private and home schooled have zero accountability for our tax dollars. Rural schools will be harmed.

Name: Joel Willoughby

Comment: This bill is not about taking money away, but applying money that sits still. When a child does not attend a public school, then certain money is set aside unused. This bill simply takes that money and applies it where it benefits that child. If this bill is passed, no money is taken away from public education. I hope this bill passes so the money can be used in the most logical way, for the benefit of the child it is attached to.

Name: Kara Schneider

Comment: Vote NO on this voucher bill. Public funds belong in public schools for MANY reasons. Iowans love our public schools and want to see them supported and funded adequately, instead of trying to run them into the ground. The vast majority of students in our state attend public schools and will continue to do so, even if vouchers become available, whether its due to their choice, finances, location, etc. Taking away money from public schools will harm our state in numerous ways. We will lose amazing teachers. People wont want to move to Iowa (for yet another reason). There are many negative downstream effects of vouchers. Vote NO and save our public schools in this state that was once one of the top in the nation. Use the money to invest in our public schools instead and get us back up there!

Name: D Petersen

Comment: I AM FOR SCHOOL CHOICE. Iowa Public Education has changed drastically in recent years and children and parents are being held captive to their school districts. With the adoption of CASEL as the gold standard by the IDOE and the infiltration of CRT and Gender Ideology. our schools have become Social and Emotional Learning camps. Academics have been pushed aside in lieu of creating social justice activists. The curriculum and educational materials have become politicized and socialized. This all needs to change. We need to get Back to the Basics in education in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Education needs completely reorganized. With over 75 percent of the positions at the IDOE being federally funded it has become a woke marking organization. Our schools are becoming indoctrination camps. Until this

allchanges, parents need options. ESAs will allow parents the option to send their kids to the best schools. Schools with Iowa values.

Name: Lisa Hall

Comment: We need to focus on improving the public schools that are used by the vast majority of Iowans. We need to fully fund our public schools. That's what's best for Iowa families. This school choice scheme will do nothing but increase inequality. It's pretty clear that that's the real goal here. Another scheme to make rich, private companies richer and the lives of the rest of us harder.

Name: Gail Bonath

Comment: Public funds should be for public schools. We need to provide more funding for public schools, not divert funds to private education. There are many counties in the state that have few or no private schools. This will hurt rural schools. Additionally, private school students already receive a great deal of assistance from public schools.

Name: Ann Johanns

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools. That this bill is being pushed through so quickly shows how little our governor cares how most Iowans feels. I think about the impact this bill would have on the children in their class with special needs. No private school is going to take them yet this bill reduces the funding those children rely on. Having them integrated into the classroom is the best experience for my children, seeing and being able to help their classmates better prepares them as giving members of society. I beg you to do whatever you can to STOP THIS BILL!

Name: Kathy Rhodes

Comment: Each year the majority of Iowans make it clear that we do NOT want public money to go to private schools. STOP trying to pass this legislation and instead turn your attention to fully and adequately funding Iowa's public schools. If private schools want public funding, they must be held to the same standards as all public schools in Iowa. The school board, teachers, and administrators must follow all of the public school state mandated requirements. They must accept all students with IEP's and support them adequately as public schools are required. Private school is a choice and should remain that, however it should not be funded by the tax payers. Our government leaders need to focus on adequately funding our public schools. We need to support and keep the excellent educators we have in this State. Our education system isn't falling behind because of the teachers, it's because of the lack of support from our government leaders and lack of adequate funding for public school programs.

Name: Tommy Flinn

Comment: I am in support of this bill for two main reasons. First, I support encouraging and helping parents to raise support and educate their children the way they wish to. Parents should have as many opportunities to decide what is best for their child and play an active role but unfortunately too many times financial constraints keep them from being able to choose a better option. Second, competition will raise the performance of both public and private schools.

Name: Brown Claudia

Comment: Strong Public Schools mean Strong Communities. We have seen that schools serve the public in many ways and specially in smaller towns. Please fund public schools at a rate that keeps up with inflation and please keep public money in public schools. Public schools must serve everyone regardless of income, ability, gender, ethnicity or social class. Public Schools have to be transparent in their management by having publicly elected school boards, must have teachers that meet licensing requirements. Private schools should not be subsidized by the taxes paid by hard working Iowa families. The state of Iowa currently requires families to be at 145% of the poverty

rate in order to qualify for some benefits such as child care assistance, but on the proposed voucher program no income restrictions are mentioned. How can it be a scholarship or a savings account when is public money awarded without a needs assessment or due to academic merit? How will this impact Iowans that don't have private schools near where they live? How will this impact our small towns? Vouchers are not what Iowa needs.

Name: Kathy Graeve

Comment: Public money belongs in Public Schools. I and countless other Iowans do NOT support the voucher scheme. Iowans are already handing over \$18 million dollars of public taxpayer money to private K12 schools. Vouchers end up in the hands of schools and for profit entities who are able to discriminate and choose who they wish to educate. Public schools welcome ALL students. Vouchers benefit wealthy families and 90% of vouchers are used by parents with children ALREADY enrolled in private schools so no opportunities are created. There is NO proof that private schools are more successful than public schools. Finally, the vast majority of Iowa students do not live within driving distance of a private schools. The Voucher scheme will take money from struggling rural schools and overcrowded suburban schools and hand it to private schools. Again, NO to the voucher scheme.

Name: Angela Johnson

Comment: I oppose SSB 1022. Public money should go to public schooling that is already struggling. Taking funds away from the public school system will only negatively impact today's children and generations to come. Fund inclusivity, fund education, fund our teachers.

Name: Barb Wheelock

Comment: I urge you to fully support our public schools. According to the Legislative Services Agency, the state's annual spending on nonpublic education was at least \$37.1 million dollars in 2018, reflecting a 53% increase since 2008. Governor Reynolds says all our children deserve choice regardless of income or zip code and I would add regardless of race, disability, religion or gender. She's correct, and it's our public schools that meet all those criteria. Please reject any further public funding of private & religious schools and fully fund our public school system, so they can continue to provide All our children throughout our state, with an excellent education.

Name: Mary Bruner

Comment: I live in Carroll Iowa. I graduated from Kuemper high school and my four children did as well. I support our private Catholic school personally. I oppose vouchers for private schools. I believe that tax dollars should be spent on public schools. 90% of the children in Iowa are educated in our public schools. They have been grossly underfunded for a decade. The current proposal of a 2.5% increase for this year is far from adequate when inflation is running at 8%. Public schools educate all children are an equalizer of opportunity for all children. I want my tax dollars spent to support public schools.

Name: Rachel Evans

Comment: I'm writing to urge lawmakers to stop this voucher and vote no. Public dollars should go towards public schools!

Name: Tad Dorsey

Comment: Once upon a time Iowa was regarded as one of the best states in the nation for educational purposes. This time is now long past and this bill is going to further Iowa's descent into irrelevance in terms of education. Public education is the backbone of the system and it is vitally important to keeping Iowa relevant. Shifting funding away from public education is a disastrous mistake that will have several severe long term implications that need to be considered. Please reconsider this bill

and think more deeply about how it could impact public education in our once great state. Thank you.

Name: Fred Pilcher

Comment: Please try to understand the legitimate worries that have been presented by so many regular Iowans. Be not swayed by untruths. Those appealing this unfair legislation are hard working teachers, administrators, and parents. I have family members in all three categories. Spend a day in our PUBLIC schools and then essentially defund them. You are wrong and no coloring book can change the truth

Name: Brown Claudia

Comment: I'm in strong opposition of SSB1022. Strong Public Schools mean Strong Communities. We have seen that schools serve the public in many ways and specially in smaller towns. Please fund public schools at a rate that keeps up with inflation and please keep public money in public schools. Public schools must serve everyone regardless of income, ability, gender, ethnicity or social class. Public Schools have to be transparent in their management by having publicly elected school boards, must have teachers that meet licensing requirements. Private schools should not be subsidized by the taxes paid by hard working Iowa families. The state of Iowa currently requires families to be at 145% of the poverty rate in order to qualify for some benefits such as child care assistance, but on the proposed voucher program no income restrictions are mentioned. How can it be a scholarship or a savings account when is public money awarded without a needs assessment or due to academic merit? How will this impact Iowans that don't have private schools near where they live? How will this impact our small towns? Vouchers are not what Iowa needs.

Name: Julie Frieden

Comment: Public dollars for Public Schools! We need to support our public schools. Taxpayers expect their tax dollars to help support public schools. We cannot continue to give less and less to our public schools and expect great outcomes. Our teachers work hard everyday to provide their students with the best education possible. We need to provide funding to help support the efforts made by those teachers.

Name: Levi Cooper

Comment: As a public school student, I oppose this bill because of its destructive nature. This defeats the purpose of public and private education and public tax dollars should not be funding our private schools. They are private for a reason and parents can choose if their child should receive an education from there. Public schools have already faced enough attack from angry parents at board meetings, restrictive education materials, and now this. I strongly urge the Iowa congress to vote NO for this bill.

Name: Kari Tietjen

Comment: I am NOT in support of this initiative and vouchers. Please fund public schools more. Teachers are leaving, they can't implement quality teaching when they're doing the jobs of 23 for a salary that is WAY under what it should be. Schools aren't able to fully implement IEP and supports for students with disabilities. Families can't afford food when school isn't in session. Double down on public schools. Leave vouchers out of it.

Name: Andrew Burkhart

Comment: WE ARE FOR SCHOOL CHOICE. Iowa Public Education has changed drastically in recent years and children and parents are being held captive to their school districts. With the adoption of CASEL as the gold standard by the IDOE and the infiltration of CRT and Gender Ideology, our schools have become Social and Emotional Learning camps. Academics have been pushed aside in lieu of creating social justice activists. The curriculum and educational materials have become politicized and socialized. This all needs to change. We need to get Back to the

Basics in education in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Education needs completely reorganized. With over 75 percent of the positions at the IDOE being federally funded it has become a woke marking organization. Our schools are becoming indoctrination camps. Until this allchanges, parents need options. ESAs will allow parents the option to send their kids to the best schools. Schools with Iowa values. It time iowa legislators have the back bone and testicular fortitude to tell the teachers unions enough is enough and we will not long standing for them turning our public schools into woke indoctrination camps. A lot of comments are complaining about the funding for schools is low and we to fully fund schools, thats funny the USA as a whole spends more on education then any other country in the world and sees the lowest return for it. I have been to several school board meetings and parents are sick of the crt/gender ideals and Marxist teachings that the public schools are teaching. If you wont allow the parents to take the tax dollars they pay to fund these institutions with them to whatever choice they make for their children then you damn well better put some teeth into the current laws so schools stop teaching that crap in schools. Even better do both and tell the teachers unions to go pound sand. quoting Vladimir Lenin give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted

Name: Mark Kolpin

Comment: Greetings,I would like to urge this esteemed committee to consider the long lasting implications of passing these changes through to the House as a whole.Public education has long been the backbone of our beloved state. This legislation would severely undermine that strength.Districts budgets are already under significant pressure due to the fact that the state has not raised the per student credit even enough to keep up with CPI the past decade. This has caused many districts to continue to ask the same teachers to do more and more and take more responsibilities on, even as pay is stagnant. A sudden reduction in dollars from the state due to parent choice would likely be the nail in the coffin for many districts, especially rural ones.For many Iowa towns, the school district is the largest employer and its last saving Grace. A sudden shock to their budget could cause some districts to consolidate even further, or even fold completely. To either end, it would have significant impact to the local economy. We have already experienced rural flight since the 1980s. This would speed that process up immensely.The educational impact alone of these educational savings accounts should immediately cause this committee to pause, but I also hope this committee considers the economic impact, specifically to rural Iowa as well. Please use your more than likely public education, and be critical thinkers.Thank you for your time and consideration.

Name: Dave Philipp

Comment: I urge you to VOTE NO to the Voucher program that was proposed yesterday in the State legislature. Instead of complaining about educational opportunities, the State should start funding public schools to resolve the issues that our Governor and legislatures feel will be resolved with an "Educational Savings Account". Instead, it only privatizes education and continues the overall degradation of education in the state. No longer are families moving to Iowa for a good education which is something we used to be known for when I grew up.Until private schools are subject to the same requirements and regulations that our public schools are (test scores, student acceptance, transportation, etc), public tax dollars should NOT be used for private schools.

Name: Sheryl Jensen

Comment: Public money should not be used for private schools.

Name: Stevie Whitehead

Comment: Please say no to ESAs and vouchers! Public schools are the lifeblood of our rural communities. Attempts for ESAs and vouchers have failed across the country and cost the taxpayers so much with no return. Restore Iowas once proud and properly

funded public schools!

Name: Tobi Drake

Comment: Most districts in this state only have a few schools available, and they are mainly public schools. Students in this state deserve a quality public education! By taking away monies from these programs you are hurting the majority (94%!) of Iowa children and the Iowa Economy. You are also driving Iowa residents (and future residents) to other states to find high quality education for their kids, since it seems our state government (you!) no longer value quality education. This bill will gut the rural school communities in our state. As a former teacher in a rural school district, I know firsthand of the lack of funds that are available to small school districts. By taking away even more money, and giving those funds to private schools, that aren't even within a 50mile radius of most rural districts (so there is no 'choice' available for those students), you're telling all your constituents, their families and students, you don't care about their future or your own community that you represent. Iowa used to have a public education system to be proud of, backed by both political parties, that encouraged growth for our students and supported all families. Where has that leadership and support gone? Please listen to your constituents, and residents of this state, and vote no to school vouchers. Please invest and grow our public schools!

Name: Madalyn Anderson

Comment: I am opposed to taxpayer funds being given to parents to use at religious and for profit schools.

Name: Gail Swartzendruber

Comment: Public State Funding should be for Public Education only. It should not be for private. Please vote no for Vouchers!

Name: Debi O'Brien

Comment: I am in opposition to this proposed bill as are all members of my family (some of whom do send their children to private school) . It is bad for our students and school staff ; if passed we will be spending more for much less just as we are currently doing with the debacle known as privatized Medicaid. It degrades the cultural tradition of good education which USED to be a point of pride for Iowans

Name: Paula Blake

Comment: I oppose this bill. Underfunding schools for years has hurt students, teachers, and communities. This bill is for a select few. We need to care for all Iowa students. Gov Reynolds is acting like a dictator. Stand up to her tactics.

Name: Blair Gordon

Comment: I am writing in opposition to the proposed voucher bill. Our public tax dollars are for our public schools. It is both reckless and irresponsible to divert our tax dollars to private and for profit schools. These schools are not accountable or transparent to Iowa tax payers, and they are not held to the same education standards or antidiscrimination standards. Our public schools and teachers need state support more than ever. Please represent our communities, and oppose the voucher bill.

Name: Shelly Fry

Comment: I went to public schools in Iowa. So did my husband, kids, and now my grand children. I live and pay taxes in Iowa to help provide that public education for ALL children in Iowa. If a parent wants to send their child to private school, they should pay for it out of their own pocket. If something is lacking in a public school the governor should be working to fix it. These vouchers are a way for her to avoid taking responsibility for a mess the GOP created. My tax dollars should NOT go to any religious based school. Public funds for public schools.

Name: Laura Castelline

Comment: Please we need to fund the public schools! Stop trying to take funds from education for vouchers to private schools, this will hurt the most vulnerable Iowans and its not what the people want.

Name: Angelique Shawda

Comment: After reading through the bill and 49 pages of already submitted comments, I am asking you to SUPPORT this bill while taking into consideration how to better explain the aspects of the bill that address many of the defunding concerns noted in these comments, such as under the current structure a student's per pupil funds are left unspent if they do not utilize the public system while the new bill actually provides a portion of that money to the public system, thus actually giving public schools access to additional funding. I appreciated Gov. Reynolds' statement that more money isn't always the solution to a problem. I was appalled when saw the salary amount when our district hired the most recent superintendent. How much of that could have been used to fund another elementary school teacher? Many districts have become bloated with extra administration positions, so the money provided to a district is going less and less to the teachers and teaching materials and more to administration. I believe parents should have the ability to apply their tax money to the accredited institution where they want their student to be educated and where they believe the money will be best spent. In some cases, the ESA funds won't fully cover the tuition of a private school, but it might be enough to bridge the gap for many families, including those where even a scholarship wouldn't be enough. Something the legislature may want to consider is a bill that requires a public district to rebalance their spending to prioritize tax money to be used to fund classroom teachers and not administration. There has often been public outcry concerning company CEOs raking in large amounts in salary and benefits while the "ordinary employees" of a company see little, but rarely is anything ever said when a district spends an enormous amount of tax money to attract a new superintendent instead of applying a portion of those available funds to helping and/or retaining the existing teaching staff. It hard for me to support more money for the public schools when I don't believe it will reach the classroom teachers and thus the students.

Name: Christine Curry

Comment: We need more support for public schools How about vouchers for public schools!

Name: Maura Pilcher

Comment: Iowa is at a turning point in its standing as a national leader in public education. While our ranking has sunk, supporting the establishment of an education savings account program (the voucher program) will be the death knell for our state. Iowans have been clear that they don't want public funds for private schools, that they want their community schools, and that they want to be education leaders again. Our state electorate is not reflecting these values. Aside from politics and national rankings, public schools create the next generation of Iowans. They create communities of diverse, empathetic, sociallyconscious, brilliant citizens. Private funds can fund private schools as they have for generations, that is their choice. However, public funds should support all Iowans.

Name: Jennifer R

Comment: The money is for the citizens of Iowa from tax dollars. Should be allocated to parents to use for education they choose for their child.

Name: Hana Velde

Comment: Every child growing up in Iowa has the right to education, and only in our public schools is it required that every child be accepted and served. Our public schools are stretched thin and sometimes struggle to meet the needs of every student, but

continuing to attack, politicize, undermine and underfund the public education system is polar opposite to a productive solution. As a parent of public school kids, I have spent hours volunteering in classrooms and with extracurriculars, and have seen firsthand the passion, dedication, and frustration of our public school teachers as they continue to serve their students in a system and society that continually undermines their efforts. As Iowans, we need to FULLY FUND and support our public school system, so that it can continue to serve EVERY CHILD IN IOWA.

Name: Jena J

Comment: We support Bill SSB22! The right to secure a quality education for your child is a God given right of any parent. Sadly, due to poor leadership in recent Iowa school system administrations, the quality of education in Iowa has been in dramatic decline. The policies regarding acceptance of pornography in libraries, the racist implication of white privilege and the disgustingly low standards for achievement are driving parents to find other alternatives for quality education for their children. Perhaps, those of you who complain that there is never enough money, should question why a Superintendent of Public Schools that are in decline, makes a total compensation package of \$400,000 annual salary. The last Superintendent who was determined to politicize the education system rather than inspire change and improvement, was given a years salary when he RESIGNED! Why not start there in your continuous search for more money. Like all successful businesses that are driven by competition, choice is a good and healthy thing for our country and our education system. The taxpayer dollars that are allotted to public schools (per child) have always been held in our states general account when a student transfers to a private learning institution. No one wins in that situation, least of all the child or the parent who pays for a service they arent receiving. Let the money follow the student and the tax payer. Perhaps a true free market approach to education will provide incentive for the current school system to stop overreaching in matters outside the fundamental mandate to provide a safe and viable learning environment for the full development of basic skills and beautiful young minds!

Name: Jeannie Krambeer

Comment: Please stop trying to run the narrative that you are providing "choice" for Iowa families. We already have choice. What you are pushing is not choice. It is using public money for private enterprise. Public schools accept all students, follow the educational regulations of the state, and do not discriminate. Private institutions do none of those things. Please do not funnel public money to private institutions that will undercut our public schools who are serve all students and are held to higher standards.

Name: Lenore Holte

Comment: Iowa had a tradition of excellence in public education, but decreases in funding have reduced education quality in our state. Taxpayers should not be responsible to pay for private education with no accountability. Vote no on private school vouchers.

Name: Sherrie Duval

Comment: I'm fortunate to live in a good school district but that could change and many families are not as fortunate. Parents pay the taxes that support the schools and they should be able to use those tax dollars to choose a school that will help their child. School Choice is a good thing and good schools will not be hurt by this. If it shuts down some schools that really aren't great anyway then that's no loss. Not helping to make the good schools have more funding when students go there hurts them and hurts the students that could benefit by moving schools. There are kids who by no fault of anything but poverty or location are forced to attend schools that aren't helping them. Adults get to choose where they work so kids should get to choose where they go to school. Its the most important decision being made for children and their future. If the fear is private schools will take alot of the funds then perhaps it should be a reason to see what they are offering that public schools aren't. Fear should not be a

reason we hold children back from the best education available to them.

Name: Kris Ranney

Comment: Our organization represents 500 constituents in SW Iowa. We are strongly in favor of school choice! We are opposed to CRT and EL and insist schools return to teaching foundational subjects like reading, writing and math!

Name: Melanie Hall

Comment: Great! Give the parents the control. If public schools cant compete they will have to up their game. Too much money is wasted in public education. Its time public schools stop pandering to the unions and start prioritizing education.

Name: Marian Houseman

Comment: As a retired educator having worked in both public and private settings, I am writing in support of fully funding public education and asking you to not bring vouchers to the state of Iowa. Public money should go to public schools. Until private schools are held accountable and are not allowed to discriminate, tax money should stay with public schools. Having a grandchild who needed to be switched from private to public schools because the private school had no special needs programs and couldnt provide support for my grandchild, I am even stronger in my belief that we need to not take any funding away from our public schools and all of the services they provide.

Name: GERALYN JONES

Comment: The argument presented is public dollars should be spent on public schools. However, when public schools stop representing the public community they are suppose to be representing, ITS TIME FOR A CHANGE. When public dollars are used to shove parents aside, its time for a change. When public dollars are used to keep information about their child away from their parents, its time for a change. When public dollars are used to lead a child to be a different alias at school then they are at home even when the parent inquired about it and the school lies to that parent, its time for a change. When public dollars are used to teach children about sexual immorality, its time for a change. When public dollars are used on an abundance of school counselors but the school has a severe bullying problem, its time for a change. When public dollars are used to pay school administration and SROs and there is no accountability for bullies, including at least notifying that childs parent of their childs behavior, its time for a change. When public dollars are being used for attorneys fees, lawsuits and media coverage but the truth is covered up or not reported, its time for a change. When public dollars are being used to hire individuals with a criminal background or sexual fetish, its time for a change. When public dollars are being used for medical mandates and your child is being masked without parental consent, its time for a change. When public dollars are being used to transform the educational environment into a social ideology and activism class, its time for a change. When public dollars are being used for pride flags, blm flags, and Marxism flags but the presence of the American Flag is argued, its time for a change. When public dollars are being used for educational purposes but our students arent being taught how to read and understand the Constitution and other founding documents, its time for a change. When public dollars are used to allow boys and girls in the same bathroom at any age and have adopted a policy to support this behavior, its time for a change. When public dollars is used to adopt cultural responsive teaching (SEL) programs and then call these programs supplemental, its time for a change. (LinnMar Community School District adopted Newsela and Character Strong for just under \$70,000 and labeled it supplemental) If schools are struggling financially, they should evaluate where these public dollars are being spent and allocated them accordingly to better serve their district. You see, ESAs are great for the families that want to send their child to a school that goes above and beyond to promote the social welfare of the families they represent. ESAs are great for that single mom that wants a quality education for their child and for it to be less of a

financial burden. ESAs are great for all families because it allows each family to send their child to school that can better serve them. Furthermore, ESAs can help the family to remove a child from an environment that they are constantly bullied in and send them to a school where bullying is taken seriously. Public dollars need to follow the student because without that child being born, that school wouldn't be getting the funds anyway. When a school (any school) stops working for the betterment and social wellbeing of their students, we have to reevaluate what has happened. From the implementation of social ideology in our hallways to the cultural responsive teaching having an impact in the curriculum, it's no wonder our students today are having emotional anxiety, depression and wanting to be someone other than who they were born to be. Remember when we used to encourage our peers to feel comfortable of who they are in their own skin and accept people for who they are, instead of promoting or encouraging children to make life altering surgical decisions and to become a different gender? I do. Public dollars USE TO be used for public schools, when the public schools stopped working to represent the public families, it's time for public dollars to follow the student. After all, these dollars are used for educational purposes and if a child's learning environment needs to shift for various reasons, those EDUCATIONAL DOLLARS, shall follow that student. I hope you read this comment, reach out for validation on any points mentioned. God Bless.

Name: Sandra Baringer

Comment: My father Maurice Baringer was influential in the establishment of the Iowa Community College System when he was a Republican legislator and later state treasurer. He passed away in 2011 and I would not presume to speak for him on most things, but I will say that he would not support these current attempts to divert funds from public schools to private schools. The proposal for private school vouchers will divert resources to schools that will not be required to serve students with special needs, provide transportation to students, hire Iowa certified teachers, perform background checks on all staff, or report student performance statistics. These should NOT be confused with charter schools. They will not be subject to Iowa public records requirements. Such schools serve boutique niche markets, not the public, and should be funded by their patrons, not by tax money. Iowa once led the country in the quality of public education. It has fallen behind because funding has not kept up with the needs of current students and teachers. Teachers have already been leaving the state due to attacks on their professionalism and salaries that are not competitive with salaries elsewhere. Iowa's current Republican leadership is going in the wrong direction with public education.

Name: Patricia Zebrowski

Comment: NO VOUCHERS! Iowa's public schools were one of the reasons our family moved here in 1988. Since then, we have seen them slowly decline. Insufficient funds. Teachers leaving the state to go to other, more welcoming states that value free public education (THINK MINNESOTA!!!). PLEASE VOTE NO!! Patricia Zebrowski

Name: Brian McLain

Comment: I am the product of school choice. I went to Consolidated rural school in elementary, a private school in Jr High, and a 2A public High School outside of my city. The more important one I wanted to focus on is consolidated rural school, though. Because when we first moved to Iowa the city we moved to just closed its local schools doors in a first round of consolidations to deal with funding cuts brought by the Brandstad administration and state legislature of the early 80s. These consolidations continued for decades. Now fast forward many years later and once again the Governor is seeking to take this finite amount of money and inject it into a private and forprofit schools system, further strangling public schools and forcing even more consolidations. The big district will be fine. They might have to close a school or two but they have the property taxes to stay afloat. The rural communities that are already dying? This could very well be the nail in the coffin for many of those

struggling communities. Because we will see even more consolidations. Local schools in rural Iowa will become more and more spread out. Resources at these schools will still dwindle and so will staff and teachers. Even more money will go to bussing and that will cut into the budget even more. In an attempt to survive the loss in state funding some school boards might jump the local property tax to make up the difference. Which would likely exacerbate an exodus and would certainly make it more difficult to bring in new residents and business. And where will these for-profit schools be to flock to as the public schools collapse in these rural areas? In urban centers. Where they can make the most money. Many rural Iowans are hours away from the nearest private school. This won't change. Just like broadband internet, private industry goes where the money is and they spend the money to build where they will see the most return on investment. That won't be rural Iowa. At a time when rural Iowa communities are desperate to bring in more young families the Iowa GOP are working to make sure they go elsewhere. Because their version of "school choice" leaves rural Iowans with no choice at all.

Name: Tasha Eggenberg

Comment: Please keep SEL and CRT out of Iowa schools. I am for school choice. The money should follow the child. We cannot and will not be held hostage by curriculum or covid restrictions that we do not agree with. I do not agree with the content in the SEL "surveys" that are administered in public schools and have to actively communicate with the schools and my children to prevent the indoctrination. That's not right. Stop accepting the government funding that is conditional on the implementation of these programs that parents/VOTERS never chose.

Name: Brian Costello

Comment: After reading through the entire list of these comments, it's obvious where a significant amount of people that took the time to comment stand. These comments are a representative sample of the public view of this proposal. However, we'll hear the governor speak of an individual parent that supports vouchers without giving a true perspective of where Iowans stand. Committee members, if you truly do read these comments and speak with your constituents, then it should be obvious vote NO!

Name: Tammy Kindt

Comment: The funding should follow the child. If they go public or private or open enroll to another school.

Name: Ashlee Nicole

Comment: CHOICE. Give choice to the parents and see where most go that will answer where most stand.

Name: Amanda Borchers

Comment: As a former Public school teacher, I understand the need for schools and their importance. Unfortunately, the values taught at the schools no longer align with the values I believe should be taught. Until parents have more say in the curriculum, guidance lessons, and values taught at the public schools, they need a choice. As a tax payer, I don't want to fund the woke ideologies of the public schools anymore. Until they are gone, I am ok with my tax dollars following a parents decision for their child. We need to give more control to the parents and value the family unit more not take control away.

Name: Teri Patrick

Comment: The public school system no longer meets the needs of all students and families. Academic scores continue to fall as the focus has shifted to SEL, transformative SEL and critical theories. Public tax dollars already go to private universities so this is not a new concept. Let parents choose, if the public schools are meeting the needs of students, they won't leave there should be no concern that students will leave the public school therefore it won't be defunded

Name: Barry Bruner

Comment: Rural communities must be able to show quality public education to attract businesses and young families. This proposal says the exact opposite. Please take a look at the big picture. Thank you.

Name: Barrie Lynn

Comment: We need school choice in Iowa. Every year the legislature throws more money at the schools and they are not getting better. Schools need to go back to basics not this woke agenda. Public schools need competition and need to know they won't get any more money till they improve. Vouchers to help parents send their children to better schools is a great idea.

Name: Bart B

Comment: Give Iowa families the power to control what they want for an education for their children. I am a public school employee and support vouchers for families to choose.

Name: Ty Mann

Comment: I am in full support of a voucher system. I am also in full support of Iowa passing legislation that would protect parents and kids from having beliefs, ideas and principles, that may go against their own, such as transgender ideology, critical race theory, etc. being taught in schools. The public education system has been hijacked by radical leftist. Its time to make public education, a neutral, nonpolitical place for kids to learn.

Name: Barrie Lynn

Comment: We need school choice in Iowa. Every year the legislature throws more money at the schools and they are not getting better. Schools need to go back to basics not this woke agenda. Public schools need competition and need to know they won't get any more money till they improve. Vouchers to help parents send their children to better schools is a great idea.

Name: Nicole Selser

Comment: I fully support the funds following the child.

Name: Sue Messerly

Comment: Public schools deserve all school funding. Do your job, governor, work to make our PUBLIC schools the best possible.

Name: Wanda Platte

Comment: I have lived in Iowa most of my life, I had a great education and then the Department of Education was formed. Schools today are a far cry from what they were. I really believe that it should be the students that are funded, not the schools. Either that or abolish the DOE.

Name: Sally Holtze

Comment: This vote has nothing to do with improving education and everything to do with money for politicians and outside companies lining up to sell their services, with no oversight to see how this money will be spent. This is corruption in politics and depriving public school students from the taxpayer dollars that we vote for. It is a shameless endeavor that further harms Iowa students. Republicans know this and must cross the aisle to vote against this terrible bill.

Name: Derek Sunderman

Comment: "Public dollars belong in Public Schools" wonder who is funding this campaign. Public dollars belong in public pockets! Public dollars should be spent on the publics own kids not other people's kids. Give the the public their money to spend on their

kids where they want to.

Name: Kim Jauer

Comment: I have some concerns about the Governor of Iowa. I disagree with everything she is proposing. As taxpayers we need to be heard. Public dollars for public schools. I am concerned the Governor is going to ruin our rural smaller schools. When I see that we have a surplus in our state I think more monies can be given to our rural schools. The idea we will give money to those families wishing to attend a private school is something I do not understand. Let those that want a private school pay for that themselves. Sincerely.

Name: Linsey Durst

Comment: Iowa was once known for its high literacy rate and quality public education. Sadly, that is no longer true. The many years of underfunding public education has put Iowas schools on a race to the bottom. The current proposed legislation to allocate public funds for private education will accelerate that decline and begs the question: why are we not focused on improving public education which ALL students are entitled to? We are undermining the future of our children and Iowa if we divert public funds from our public schools. I urge this legislature to abandon this irresponsible proposal and turn its energy to adequately funding our public schools.

Name: Marla Mayberry

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB1022. Vouchers or Educational Savings accounts will harm our Public School system, which more than 90% of Iowa students rely on. It would especially harm our rural districts and force more consolidation.

Name: Hilary Henke

Comment: Please support public schools and vote against any voucher bill that will give money to individual students. 1. Public schools educate everyone. They have accountability and standards they must meet, unlike private schools. 2. Public schools are governed by a publically elected school board. This is not the case for private schools. 3. Public schools have been chronically underfunded for years, which has led to programmatic budget cuts and larger class sizes. And yet, public schools continue to do their essential work in innovative and effective ways to help all students succeed. 4. Iowa is facing a teacher shortage crisis. We need a sustained, focused effort to retain our teachers in Iowa. Siphoning public dollars away from public schools will only exacerbate the problem. 5. Vouchers will only expedite rural school consolidation. Over 85% of Iowas counties lost population in the last census. We need to reverse this trend and keep Iowas rural economy strong. This starts by ensuring there are highquality public schools in our rural and small communities.

Name: Anu Subramanian

Comment: Public tax money for is meant for public schools. Period. If not, the public schools will lose students ajnd funding and Iowa a bills and families will lose. Therell be increased brain drain and iowa will no longer be attractive to professionals and tax payers

Name: Amelia Lobo

Comment: Iowa's public schools are underfunded and this proposal takes more funding away from Iowa's public schools. The quality of our public schools, hadfor a long time been one of the primary ways we kept Iowans in the state and attracted new Iowans. We need to strengthen public schools to once again grow our population. Put simply, this is a sop to religious parents who can pay for their own kids' religious education, to religious private schools and to the Governor's interests. It hurts ALL Iowa kids especially those who live in rural areas. Who will move to or stay in rural areas if the schools are even worse than they are now? Public schools are the basis of American democracy. Let's not follow the path of England and the developing world, where the seeds of inequality are planted in preschool. Public dollars are for public

schools!

Name: Michels Amanda

Comment: When private schools can ask a student to leave or deny necessary services, it is NOT choice for all. Its ONLY parent choice for families with children who dont struggle academically. Its ONLY parent choice for families with children who do not have severe trauma in their life. Its ONLY parent choice for families with children who dont have an IEP. IF YOU WANT CHOICE then all students must be served in the same capacity that public schools serve students. Private schools can and will (and lets be honest), already do, choose to remove students they dont want to work with. PLEASE vote NO!

Name: Trista E

Comment: I am for eliminating public schools indoctrination of CASEL CRT and Gender Ideology. My 9 year old should not be dealing with other students questions about his sexual orientation in 4th grade! I cannot believe how much public school has changed since my two oldest now 19 and 21 have been in elementary. They didnt used to show kids CNN and Biden clips back then or send your kids to white shaming plays. Its not about academics in school its about inclusion political correctness diversity and teaching kids via a computer instead of books! TWO DAYS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL WERE CANCELED BECAUSE OF A CYBER BREACH! Im disgusted they couldnt teach our kids without technology and their computers. Those have a place but should not be used as a sole means of teaching. Especially in elementary schools. Not impressed with public schooling and the direction they want to go.

Name: Brett Mason

Comment: The Government does not have any Government Money. Every dollar comes from the peoples' money, in taxes. Every dollar allocated for education comes from citizens. Once we decide to provide education funding for students, this money must go for the students. The question before us is simply this: who decides what children should learn and where? The answer MUST come down to Parents. The parents can place the children into a school. They can openenroll to another school. Or if what's best for their children is another school, they decide. The funding for the child's education must go for the child's expectation. This is not about government schools, or government organizations. It's about the kids. The funding should go where the kid goes, and the parents must decide.

Name: Blakely Mortvedt

Comment: Public dollars should be used to fund public schools. If people are concerned about the quality of education (the reason being used for vouchers) then money should be invested to improve schools for all of Iowas kids, not just the few who *might* benefit from vouchers. However, the use of vouchers in other states has shown that vouchers generally go to families who are already utilizing private schools, so it wont actually improve the educational situation for any kids.

Name: Amy Dea

Comment: Public education has become something it was never meant to be. Most parents have trusted that children are getting the best education possible. They believe every administrator and teacher does everything in the best interest of their child. This is no longer the case. Our superintendent does not actively address our concerns he points to a policy and says that is the only option. This past semester the state recommended policy changes and they were all adopted. The system is broken when so much time is spent with social emotional learning. Parents are not even aware that their child is being forced to take inappropriate surveys and answer questions the school has no business asking. This is a violation of parental rights. Until the indoctrination stops there must be another choice! When their is no accountability and our schools have

such poor standards there must be another choice! The students of Iowa deserve to reach their greatest potential. They deserve to graduate virtuous and not traumatized. Please do what is in the best interest of our students.

Name: Robin Wilson

Comment: There have been a lot of comments concerning the keeping of public school monies for public schools and for those wishing an alternative to just pay for it. I will ask those with this position to tell me where the 'public' school money comes from? Think through this with me. The money comes from tax payers. Why should I have my money to go to a 'public' school that I will not send my children to? This is not money that is gotten from a magic pot somewhere...it comes from me and from you. Here's the solution, take my money out of the pot and allow me to use it in a school that my children benefit from. You don't have to agree with my choice but you should be able to understand the economics of this proposal.

Name: Michael Schmitz

Comment: The election was a referendum on this proposal. The governor won by a record margin and the people elected a much more conservative legislature to enact this change. Choice is what Iowa families and voters clearly want. Status quo is what the system wants

Name: Nichole Black

Comment: I am ALL for this bill! Approve it! We as parents have the right to have our children properly educated without being indoctrinated with the far leftist agenda that has been over taking public education. People commenting against the bill havent even read it, they dont understand how wonderful this bill is. Its giving parents more control which is absolutely our right!

Name: Ruthina Malone

Comment: As a taxpayer, school board member and spouse of a public education teacher, I am writing to urge our local leaders to keep public dollars for public schools. My underfunded our schools, you are underfunded the opportunity for thousand of Iowan youth to reach their full potential. You are underfunding businesses who want to recruit and retain some of the best minds in their respective areas. You are underfunded our state to remain a leader that other states use to look as a guiding example for public education. By saying this program is offering school choice is misleading. There will be hundreds of kids turned away from schools due to disabilities or behavioral issues. Public schools accepts every child where they are and not turn them away. Instead of vouchers, please consider funding public schools so that theu can provide additional supports to those who need it. Mental health counseling and a free lunch program are two things that would go a long way for so many of our Iowa families. Please don't continue to create a us vs them situation by underfunding public education.

Name: Amy Grunhovd

Comment: I was a public school teacher for 38 years. When I began teaching Iowa led the nation in public education. That is sadly not the case anymore. DO NOT take funds away from public education. Public schools follow guidelines and standards to make sure students learn. They suffer when they are educated elsewhere where there is no accountability. Iowas students are our future. Its time the Iowa state government fully supports Iowa Public Schools and stops their current agenda. VOTER NO our future depends on fully funded public schools.

Name: Steve Roe

Comment: The Legislature and Governor are responsible for the quality of our public schools. Vouchers for private schools is counter to your charge. No tax dollars for private schools. If the Governor and Legislators want private schools, they can contribute their own money, not my tax dollars.

Name: Steph Harris

Comment: Families should have a choice and the funding should follow the student!

Name: Jennifer Herrington

Comment: The Catholic Church fully funds their schools and provides scholarships for those in need. No vouchers needed. We have a Lutheran school in Page County, the only private school. It is also fully funded by the Lutheran Church and provides scholarships for those in need who want to attend. Not even half the counties in Iowa have a private school. Vouchers are unfair!

Name: Rebecca Dunk

Comment: We all should want what is best for our child(ren), which may not be in the public schools. Vouchers will help those less fortunate have the option to attend a private school. Public schools are very different from when many of us attended. They have strayed away from teaching skills and working together with parents. Please do not be swayed by the volume of comments from those who are either unfamiliar with what is happening in our public schools or are commenting at the request of the ISEA.

Name: Anemarie Ganea

Comment: Interesting that many people have no clue how much money the state invests in schools! Also they also dont realize that private schools are funded on a small percentage by the state also! Information on s there for everyone to read. When parents have a choice on the best school for their child/children then schools have to complete for that family to join them! They have to offer something more and better than other schools. That is what the choice should be ! Better curriculum, better teachers ! No political and sexual grooming! Skilled children for future companies!

Name: Mike Sass

Comment: Taking public tax dollars and giving them to for profit private schools is wrong. They don't have the same accountability that public schools do. This will leave less money for public education and force many schools to close. It is wrong.

Name: Brenda Smith

Comment: I am for PARENTS CHOICE in what school our kids go to. Many say we already have a choice but many dont finacially have that luxury! After battling pornographic materials in the public school and failing I believe this law will hold public schools accountable to the parents whose kids attend the district and to the tax payers who help foot the bill. In other states where this is available it is doing great! As a taxpayer myself I would like to see the part of money I pay for my kid to school to follow her where ever we choose for her to go. We are the ones who the legislators are accountable to not unions and other lobbist.

Name: Aaron Ward

Comment: Im so grateful for the possibility of school choice. My wife and I took our older two kids out of school to homeschool them this year and intend to take our younger two out next year. Were not happy with the direction that publics schools are headed from a religious/moral perspective and do not want to financially support them any longer.

Name: Lisa Cunningham

Comment: I am opposed to this bill as are the majority of Iowan's. Just because Iowa has become a red state doesn't mean you were all given a mandate to move unpopular legislation down our throats. There are many Republicans who oppose school vouchers, but chose to vote for Republican candidates anyway. It doesn't mean they suddenly agree with you on this issue.I'm also tired of our representatives boasting that there is more money allocated for public education this year than any previous

year. Well of course there is! Each year that the cost of living goes up, so should public school funding. So please stop telling us this is the best year yet because our schools have more money than any previous year. They're still underfunded. If you don't trust polls, trust the comments below. Very few, if any, are in favor of this bill. Iowan's do not want school vouchers, they want good public schools.

Name: Connie Cecil

Comment: Public funds belong in public schools! One of the reasons to live in the state of Iowa has always been the great public schools. Our students deserve better from our public leaders. Our teachers deserve better.

Name: Brian Mann

Comment: It's disheartening to watch school board meetings and see them report on declining test scores. And while I think deep down they probably care, they act like it doesn't really matter if kids can't read or write or do math with proficiency because they're so focused on their social and emotional learning. As somebody who has done homeschooling with some of my kids, I tend to compare and contrast what we've done at home with the work they're bringing home from school and quite frankly I'm just disappointed in our schools right now. I can understand why parents are demanding other options at this time. I AM IN FAVOR OF SCHOOL CHOICE for the sake of the kids and their families but really I think we just need a major overhaul of our public schools. They're focused on the benefit of the teacher's union and their political ideologies instead of our kids. I'm opposed to people trying to leverage our kids this way for their political gains.

Name: Arthur Horgen

Comment: Please REJECT funding private schools with taxpayer money. Quality education for ALL can be best served by adequately funding public education and allowing those educators in improving and expanding opportunity for all students. Thankyou.

Name: Kaye Drevs

Comment: This is a classic case of robbing from Peter to pay Paul except in this case Peter (public schools) is already struggling to make ends meet and Paul (private schools) already has plenty of private funds to keep them afloat. If you are really concerned about the quality or the lack of education in the State of Iowa, please ask the teachers who are trying to educate your children with both hands tied behind their backs and now you want to tie their feet as well. The other item that all people should be concerned about is the accountability of those that are being provided with funds. Public schools already have to be accountable for everything they do down to every last penny which I am sure often seems like that is all they get for help is a penny. Private schools currently do not have to provide the same accountability and I am willing to bet would not welcome this level of scrutiny. Please stop throwing money away and put it to good use like we use to and then watch the quality of education in Iowa soar like it use to.

Name: Beth Pargulski

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools. If you are making the decision to send your child to private school then you should already have those funds. Invest in our public schools and make education a priority in Iowa. Education in Iowa used to be one of the best. Invest in public education and make it so again

Name: Linda Linn

Comment: I am in opposition to SSB 1022. Public dollars need and should go to public entities. Private schools already receive money from my tax dollars. Iowa's public school system preschool K12 Community College and Regent Schools were once praised for producing the best of the best and for their innovation in instruction. Because of the many years of being underfunded and outside the state political PAC dollars

degrading our educators and schools, we are not a premier state for education. Private schools do not have the same requirements for quality of education and do not have to accept ALL students. I have experienced this very fact. I also know, coming from a Catholic Church with a school, that fundraisers are done so that any student will be able to attend and money is not the issue. I am also opposed to taking away the categorical fund carryover funds to be used for other purposes. IF districts have a large categorical carryover, the IA Dept of Ed could be assisting them to see where services for that category of student needs could be met with the use of additional funds. Please vote NO for SSB 1022 and help to put Iowa back in the forefront of public education in the USA.

Name: Tassi Fuson

Comment: Vote No on this bill. Public dollars should be for public schools. This bill will kill rural schools and make the opportunity for a quality education for all so much more difficult. Focus on making our schools better. Iowa used to be one of the top in the nation for education and now year after year we have been in the bottom. Address the issue.

Name: Katie Backlin

Comment: Please explore and consider this bill! The needs and priorities of all families and our children are not always met within our options for public school. A small help to be able to pursue and advocate for what is best for our family and meets the unique needs of our kids is an opportunity we need to allow people.

Name: Mary Bontrager

Comment: Do not use public money to support private schools. Our government should increase funding to support ALL students and staff instead of diverting money away from our schools. Will private schools be required to accept and provide quality instruction to ALL students? Will they be required to follow the same standards (for example, follow 504 and IEP plans) and equity practices (no exclusion every child applying must be accepted into the school) as public schools? We must stand up for ALL students in Iowa and make our public schools stronger, not steer educational funds away from them.

Name: Eric Saylor

Comment: SSB 1022 proposes an inappropriate diversion of public money intended for public schools to private individuals and institutions, and should be voted down. "School choice" has always existed, and it is disingenuous to imply otherwise if people want to send their children to private school, they have every right to do so. But the general public should not see their taxes funneled to institutions that do not serve the entire community, and it is this change that this voucher bill proposes. Not only will it drain more resources away from already underserved public school districts (especially rural districts), it will open the door to discrimination against whole categories of people by private schools based on gender, mental health, academic achievement (real or perceived), linguistic fluency, religion, and any number of other categories that openly segregate. This is not in the public interest. The way to strengthen public schools is not by "competition" the metrics for which remain unstated but by fully funding them and providing all teachers and students with the resources they need to succeed.

Name: M.A. Kirkpatrick

Comment: Public dollars belong in Public Schools. Public Dollars should not be spent in schools who can pick and choose their student population and don't have public oversight. Parents of private school students can and do speak at public school board meets to express how they feel this district is handling their tax money and get to vote in public school board elections. However public school parents or the general public don't have any means to do the same at the private schools in our communities.

Name: Troy VandeKamp

Comment: After much thought, I question why this bill is needed. Parents already have this option, its called Open Enrollment. If need be, modify Open Enrollment to allow parents to move their students at any time, without the approval of school boards in both districts. Also, the rhetoric is that our schools are failing our kids. They are not, our LEADERS are. Our schools were #1 in the Nation when I was school age, we have fallen, due in large part, due to policies put in place since 1980 (during this time weve had a primarily Republican majority and Republican Governor. On the Federal level it is much more even through those years. As a taxpayer, if a parent wants to send their students to private (for profit) schools, fine. Let them take their portion of taxes that go to education with them (even on a \$100,000 per year Salary, if you allowed them to take 100% of the state tax, soon to be a 4% flat tax, they pay in, it would be much less than the proposed bill. In reality, the portion of my tax \$\$s that go to education are minimal, maybe 20% of my entire tax bill, which is less than \$500. IF, you require these Private Schools to meet the needs of disabled, ELL, and ESL students, I may be ok with a voucher, but the bottom line is this voucher is worthless to those parents as those schools will not accept those students. I have voted primarily Republican my entire life, but this is a bad bill dreamed up by a lobbyist for private schools. Instead, maybe invest in our public school system instead of constantly underfunding them.

Name: Bethany Melendy

Comment: As a former teacher who left the profession due to lack of work/life balance and inadequate pay, I ask legislators to actually listen to your voters and fully fund public schools in Iowa. The local school districts are short staffed and the pay they are offering for support positions cannot support a person to live here anymore. I live in a rural area! The local gas station and McDonalds pays more than the school does! Would you, personally, be willing to take on a job in an Iowa school that pays \$1012 an hour? Could you afford to house your family, pay for insurance, and feed you family on that? It's not only teachers who need better wages, but also our school support staff that makes it so our schools can actually function! Our IT, custodians, food services, and administrative staff deserve to be paid more as well! As a former teacher, having teachers have around 30 kids in class, it's like herding cats. If the last time you've been in a school building, was when you were attending classes I strongly recommend that you actually go and observe some classes in your rural school districts because with as old as many of you are, you don't know anything about education and schools.

Name: Randi Koehler

Comment: As a younger teacher in a small school district, vouchers could be detrimental to our school and other school districts. It is important that we continue to fund students and not systems. In no other taxfunded entity are citizens/taxpayers allowed to opt out and use their tax funds elsewhere. (Law enforcement, fire department, hospitals, public health, municipal golf courses, etc.) Vouchers/ESAs remove funds from public schools that educate 92% (+/-) of Iowa students. For example, if a district lost one child per grade level to a nonpublic school their enrollment would decline by 13 students. This would cost loss of jobs for teachers and result in even larger class sizes. Class sizes have continued to increase with increased responsibilities for us, making it even more challenging to provide students with the quality of education they deserve. $13 \times \$7,400(\text{state aid}) = \$96,200$ reduction in funding for the district, while not reducing expenditures at all. This creates a negative impact on the rest of the students in that district. Public schools have continued to do more with less, year after year. Public schools have expanded course offerings, expanded the option for college credits, and expanded technical experience and workbased learning programs.

Name: Jesse Newman

Comment: This is fantastic news for families all over Iowa. Now families will be able to choose schools that better align with their values, and or educational desires. No longer will living in any certain neighborhood dictate your child's education, values and or future. This will cause all schools to actively work at being desirable to the families in their communities. They will not be able to take their "customers" for granted, but rather show themselves to be worth the families financial and relational investment. I think that in the long run, this will actually make our public schools better, as it will force them to become desirable to people of both sides of the political aisle. And also, they will have to work just to keep the members of their own neighborhood. Who knows, perhaps it will cause our schools to get back to educating rather than indoctrinating our children. That's a win on every level.

Name: Heather Schmedinghoff

Comment: This bill deeply concerns me on several levels. I have investigated the public and private schools in my area as a mother of students currently in the 7th and 4th grade. Quiet frankly neither public or private schools meet my children's needs. We have always supplemented and provided enrichment for their education at home and will continue to do so for the entirety of their lives. Both when they have been enrolled in public and private schools. First private schools are legally able to discriminate against students. The fact that they might not at the moment does not mean they won't. The reality is that they already do. The private schools near me are all religious based. One requires families to sign a faith statement as part of the application process. Regardless of if you personally agree with the faith statement is irrelevant, it is a requirement for admission and a form of discrimination. Another form of discrimination is based on not being able to provide students if they have special needs. Parents who choose to send their children to the parochial schools near me have the choice of students being bused to the nearest public school for their child's IEP needs or signing that they are willingly dismissing the IEP and it will be removed. None of the private schools near me offer a gifted program. For my family personally this has left us with trying to decide between 2 inadequate choices. Meet our child's sensory and social needs by choosing private school, but giving up the gifted program and accelerated classes offered at the public school. These aren't good choices for parents. Good choices build communities, enable all stake holders, provide transparency. The governor is right money isn't everything, but she is wrong in saying vouchers will solve the problem. Look deeply at the struggles facing all schools private and public more students qualifying for free and reduced lunch more students who are English Language Learners more students who need additional academic or social support in the classrooms supporting students with more technology in the classroom Money isn't everything but all the problems I listed and many more are problems solved by money. Fully funding public schools so they are able to have small class sizes and meet the needs of all students helps the entire community and gives parents really choice. My full list of concerns is much longer. I fear for my children's education which is not where I ever envisioned my family being when we moved to Iowa. I hope you will closely look at why the vast majority of Iowans are not in favor of this bill and look for better solutions. Thank you

Name: Jan Evans

Comment: I am opposed to this bill. After a decade of insufficient funding to our public schools, removal of collective bargaining rights, and demonization of teachers and public schools this march toward privatization with public money seems part of the plan. Public funds should be directed to schools that all abide by the same rules and accept all students.

Name: Jordan Scheibel

Comment: I do not know how any rural legislators could support this proposal. There is a reason that this has been so difficult to pass the last few years its going to harm rural schools that are already on the fiscal brink with dwindling enrollment by accelerating that trend. The further deterioration of rural schools is going to harm rural communities

where schools are the one institution holding them together. Where are rural students going to go to private school? I know the answer for-profit online education corporations are going to move in to fill this void since there is absolutely no physical capacity in most of the state to privately educate a bunch more students. Its just another scheme to redistribute public dollars upward into private hands while starving public institutions, and then blaming those institutions for their deterioration and decline. And those students who leave public schools are still going to demand resources from the school districts even as they take their enrollment dollars elsewhere.

Name: Stacia Zink

Comment: This kind of legislation doesnt promote choice for anyone. Iowans can already choose to homeschool or open enroll to a different public school. Lets keep public money in public schools. Lets invest in the future of our kids and the strength of our communities by providing public schools with the funds they need to educate future generations of Iowans. Lets build on Iowas legacy of strong public education, and keep vouchers out of our state.

Name: Samantha Turnbull

Comment: Considering policies like this makes Iowa less and less appealing to families. Decreasing the quality of public schools by reducing their funding to subsidize private school tuition will decrease the quality of education children receive, make Iowa even less attractive to young people and families and is an extremely short sighted move. I am an employed, tax paying professional in a field that Iowa is in desperate need of, but before that I am a mom of two public school students and pushing through bills like this without public support will lead to families like mine leaving this state.

Name: Maryann Huey

Comment: It turns out that only 53% of Iowa students receive 3 years of high school math aligned with the Iowa Core. I have recently completed an analysis by district size that highlights the needs of small school districts and large urban districts in terms of math instruction. This will be published soon. Midsized schools seems to be faring alright, but the majority of our students' learning outcomes are not stellar. The idea that "choice" will somehow improve schools when we already have local control is ridiculous. I have been in urban schools where all Algebra and Geometry classes have 30+ students with 1 teacher and no other supports. The underfunding of schools is an embarrassment, and we are harming children and robbing them of their future. I challenge anyone in our government to actually go into an urban school, like North in DM, and sit in a math classroom for a few hours. It is pretty obvious that we are starving our schools. Our students and teachers need and deserve real solutions.

Name: Rachel Ward

Comment: I am so grateful that the state of Iowa is looking into allowing our tax dollars to go to the school of the parents' choosing. If public schools want to keep our tax dollars, then let them become a valuable competitor on the education scene. I have lost faith in public schools as they have abandoned historically valued education for new social ideologies. If public schools want to be entitled to such a significant amount of public funds, let them return to the standards public education was founded on. Until then, let citizens decide what schools to invest their funds in. Competition is good. VOTE YES.

Name: Robyn Groff

Comment: I oppose this bill. Private schools do not have to accept all students, namely those who require special education services, ESL services, and other specialized services. These students and families would not have a "choice." We should be fully and appropriately funding our public schools. What has happened to this state? We used to pride ourselves on our topnotch school systems. I graduated from a small, rural

high school. I have chosen to remain in this state to raise my family. We need a high quality public education system to retain and attract people to live here. Please vote NO on this and instead fully fund public schools.

Name: Abby M

Comment: Public money belongs in public schools. Students in rural communities will be left behind.

Name: Lora T

Comment: I thank you for considering the many options for public education. Thank you for giving pause and not making quick changes without seriously considering the consequences these changes will make. Thank you for considering the best steps for growth for our kids in this great state of Iowa. Your choices will impact hundreds of Children and families for years to come.

Name: Mary Fasse-Shaw

Comment: Please do not vote to advance this voucher bill. Public tax money is for public schools. People do have a right to send their children to private schools, but they should not be able to do so with public money. Our public schools have been shortchanged the last 10 years, despite the spin that schools have been given lots of money. The money has not kept up with inflation. Many cuts in school districts have been made to the detriment of the students because of these cuts. The voucher money helps the wealthy, not the economically deprived. Educationally, we used to be first in the nation. We are no longer. Public funds for public schools.

Name: Carrie Rice

Comment: I'm writing to express my displeasure that vouchers are being considered in the state of Iowa. I've been a public school educator for 24 years, and I cannot believe this state is considering cutting even more funding from Iowa's public schools with this dangerous plan. I teach at LawtonBronson High School. We are, according to the Iowa Department of Education, a highperforming school. Over 90% of my students are proficient in reading and writing. We do what is best for students all day every day. We border a metropolitan area with access to several private schools. As it is right now, we take transfers from those private schools. I cannot express to you seriously enough how behind those students are who come to us from those schools. There is no oversight there, there is no yearly testing, and those schools are not held to the standard we are. Now, you want to give them our students and take money from us. It's unbelievable to me that you are willing to sacrifice rural schools in Iowa with this program. When Sioux City loses 10 students, they barely notice it. When LawtonBronson loses 10 students (to a lowerperforming school, mind you), we lose a teacher's salary. This program will kill rural schools in Iowa. These schools are the touchstones for smalltown life across this state. The ripple effect this dangerous program will have cannot be understated. You will effectively be hurting your own voters. Please reconsider supporting this bill. Your support of public education will not be forgotten.

Name: Patrick Johanns

Comment: No to vouchers. Our tax dollars should be going to provide for the common good PUBLIC schools. The voucher system enriches private schools and takes away tax dollars from our public schools. It unfairly benefits people in urban areas and provides no benefit to those in rural areas. Only 42 of Iowa's 99 counties have private schools in them. With funds following students, spending our tax dollars to promote private schools directly harms our public education system. Take this money and increase the spending on public schools. In the 1990s, Iowa was in the top five in just about every comparison of reading and math scores. Now we are in the middle of the pack. Why? One reason is that our spending per student has not kept up with other states. In 196970 Iowa spent \$798 per student compared to a national average of

\$751. In 1979, Iowa spent \$2,164 compared to a US average of \$2,088. Then we stopped putting our money where our kids were: 1989, Iowa \$4,190 US Ave \$4,643 1990, Iowa \$6,564 US Ave \$6,912 2009, Iowa \$9,748 US Ave \$10,636 2018, Iowa \$11,933 US Ave \$13,187 So NO to vouchers, YES to funding our public schools properly.

Name: Rob Saak

Comment: Fully support vouchers I have 3 kids that have gone through public school and my wife and daughter currently work in a public school. We've had a great experience but I do fully support vouchers. This is not "public" money as many are saying, it's tax payer money from private citizens. We should be able to choose where, when and how our kids are educated. One reason that so many are push for vouchers is because some teachers have used their position to push an agenda. Teachers should teach and leave the morality issues to parents.

Name: Tracy Fahrion

Comment: Public dollars should fund public schools. Period.

Name: Stefanie Strum

Comment: As a mother of 4 who initially had her children in public school and has since moved to private, it would be wonderful to use my tax dollars for my childrens education. Our local public district will financially feel no change in funding since they do not get funds if my kids dont attend either way. Please pass this bill!

Name: Jeff Everts

Comment: I am against vouchers public money is for public schools!

Name: Mark Schmedinghoff

Comment: I am a parent of two boys who attend a private Catholic school. I also know right from wrong, and this is wrong. It is the responsibility of the state government to provide a free public education for ALL students in Iowa. The majority party has spent the last decade systematically underfunding the public school system, and now they are engaged in an effort to fully destroy the system by diverting money to private schools. Parents already have choices in Iowa, and one of those choices should be a fully funded, high quality public school in every community. That is not the case now, and any public money available should be directed to rebuilding and improving our public school systems first.

Name: Dustin Soroka

Comment: As a taxpayer in Iowa, I expect my tax money to be used for public schools, not private schools. Public schools are underfunded in this state and have been for many years. Parents already have a choice on where their child(ren) attend school as open enrollment qualifications have been altered. Parents can choose to send their children to a public school district other than their resident district. Private schools are not held to the same standard as public schools and are not required to offer the same services such as public schools. How is this bill going to give school choice to the parents of a special education student? How is taking money away from Iowa public schools and giving it to private schools going to improve the education system? No other tax funded entity allows for individuals to opt out and have their money go elsewhere. Don't do it for education. Vote NO on this bill. PUBLIC MONEY IS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Name: Jon Lutz

Comment: Thank you, Kim Reynolds and the State Legislature for finding the value of school choice. As parents of two children in private school for 18 years, OUR TAX DOLLARS have not gone where we desired them to go. Seeing the success of other states makes this an easy choice to move forward with. Let us use this opportunity to

get our educational system back to the top in the country from where we are at. You heard from our voters in the November election that you are on the right track and all the comments here are noise compared to the reality you saw during the election. Stay strong and thank you.

Name: Steve Norton

Comment: I'm VERY much against public funds going to private schools. Rebuild the public schools that the Republicans have been underfunding and trying to dismantle for the last 20 years.

Name: Brice Plein

Comment: This bill is absolutely ridiculous that it is disenfranchising our public educators by pulling funding from them in the form of vouchers and categorical funding supplements. This is not in the best interest of the educational foundation of the state. Horrible bill and should not be passed.

Name: Jessica Freers

Comment: I ask that you reflect on how establishing an education saving account program will affect ALL of Iowa's students. If passed, this bill will positively affect a select few of Iowa's students, but not all. A child with special education needs, a child with significant mental health crisis in their life, or a child with physical needs, can and will be denied access to most nonpublic schools. If passed, Iowa will become a state of have's and have not's. I strongly believe this will not encourage families to move to our state, but instead avoid it. Please take time to reflect on your decisions and think through all aspects of this bill. If you are a proponent, please consider making significant changes so that all public and nonpublic entities follow the same accountability measures.

Name: Laura Robson

Comment: Public money belongs in public schools! As a Mom of 3 children in a rural Iowa public school, I see firsthand the need to fully invest in our local public school system! It has been proven that money invested in Iowa public schools over the last few years has not kept pace with inflation and, unfortunately, I see signs of this firsthand within our rural district. We have cut teaching positions entirely, shared other resources between different districts, and all but eliminated field trips and/or enrichment activities outside of the classroom. At whose expense? The kids! What has happened to Iowas first in the nation in education goals for our public schools? Furthermore, private schools, which are inaccessible for most in rural Iowa, are not held to the same educational standards as public school. Other states who have implement voucher programs such as that proposed (Indiana), have data that continues to show the negative impact voucher programs have on ALL public schools. The children of our state deserve so much better! Please stop this voucher bill and fully invest in public schools with our public dollars!

Name: Amanda McCurley

Comment: I am writing in strong opposition to SSB 1022. My partner and I both grew up attending public schools in Iowa, and want the same for our daughters (ages 8 and 6). They love their school, and I do too. I grew up in rural Iowa, and I don't think anyone is going to put a charter school in this region. Are they suggesting online school for these students? Wasn't that not allowed during COVID, but it would be OK now? I do not have enough money to compete with those with interests in pushing this bill, but I do know that children in Iowa deserve better than this. Please do not allow public money to go towards private schools.

Name: Penny Hetrick

Comment: I strongly oppose SSB 1022. Public money is for public education. The voucher bill not only will take money from Iowas public schools, but it is also unconstitutional

and discriminatory. Please VOTE NO so that Iowas public schools can continue to strongly serve all of Iowas students.

Name: Elizabeth Charlson

Comment: I strongly support this bill! It's about time that parents can choose where to send their child and not become bankrupt from sending them somewhere else than the public schools. The public school system has made it clear they want our children and want to brainwash them with their radical ideologies. Let's get back to the basics or reading, writing and math! School boards across Iowa and the nation have made it clear they don't care what parents think. I am a tax paying citizen and shouldn't have to fund these radical idealogies. If the public school actually focused on what children should be learning then I would be in support of them but they haven't for a very long time. Competition is ALWAYS a good thing and maybe this will make the public school system be able to focus and become better.

Name: Constance Stannard

Comment: Vote NO on this bill. This is a blatant attack on our public schools and will only serve to divide us. The introductory limitation to low income parents is a red herring that is designed to hide the real intentto support private schools, whether religious or secular, at the expense of public education. The claims of "promoting competition" are likewise disingenuous. Private schools have a profit motive; public schools do not. This whole argument needs to fail. As an attorney and a former special education teacher and the parent of both gifted and special needs learners, we need to shore up our public education with public funds. Those who wish to opt out of the public education system are free to do so. Instead of pretending that this bill will aid the disadvantaged we need to admit it is really only going to hurt public education.

Name: Chelsey Kolpin

Comment: Many arguments for adding a vouchertype program in Iowa center around school choice. I have great news for those making that argument: we already have it! Students are able to open enroll to any school they wish, and they are also welcome to go to private schools, many of which provide tuition assistance to those who can't afford to attend. This proposed shift is not only unlawful, as it gives public education funds to private entities who don't have any checks and balances to account for their use of those funds, it's unethical. Private schools have no accountability standards as to what they teach students or even who teaches themdid you know you don't have to have formal education training to teach in a private school? There are no standards or benchmarks you need to be sure to include in instruction or in evaluating students. And a good portion of a student's day can be spent in religious instruction, a clear violation of the separation of church and state, if state funds are being used in private schools. Are public schools perfect? Absolutely not. There will always be room for growth and improvement. Guess where that startshaving the funding to grow, implement new ideas, and pay teachers a living wage and staff enough teachers to fully cover curriculum needs, classroom sizes, and prevent burnout. Please put this issue to rest and keep it out of Iowa's PUBLIC school plan.

Name: Steph Mathis

Comment: Thank you for giving parents options for better schooling for our kids!

Name: Karla Ries

Comment: Private schools are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools. If public funding is approved for private schools they should be required to admit all students, and abide by the same rules that public schools are required to follow.

Name: Jill Myers

Comment: As students needs continue to rise, it is disheartening that our government continues to want to pull funding away from public education. In no other state has this type of program worked to better public education. I am a proud public educator and come

from a long line of proud public school teachers. Giving our public tax dollars to a private entity makes zero sense. Comparing private schools to public schools is not an apples to apples comparison. Private schools don't have the same requirements and oversight that public schools do. They don't have to accept and educate every student. Parents have ALWAYS had the choice to send their child to a school that best fits their child's needs, it's called open enrollment and with the changes made recently, that is easier than ever to do. Should they choose private education, there are already scholarships for those that can't afford it and those are not funded with our tax dollars. This bill needs to be stopped now before it is too late. Please listen to the people who are on the front line every single day. Vote NO on this ridiculous bill and keep our public schools funded the way that they deserve.

Name: Tom Plein

Comment: How can anyone in their right mind approve of this bill? Basically you are taking money away from public schools and giving it to parochial schools. Don't understand the reasoning of giving everyone an opportunity to go to parochial schools. The best opportunity any student has is attending public schools and now you want to take money away from them. This is unbelievable. Parochial schools get to pick and choose who come to their schools. Public schools take any and all students no matter if they have educational problems or not this bill cannot pass and still keep our public schools where they are. Iowa used to be the number one educational state in the union now we are down to about the 12th best state. This is absolutely ridiculous. You must deny this bill.

Name: Dara Martin

Comment: Please pass this bill. Knowing that passing this bill will not take ANY funding away from public school seems like a no-brainer. If we as parents realize our children would be better served in a different educational setting, why should we be penalized. If that money went with the student to the private school it would be a game changer. If it's for the child's education, why would the amount of money for this student just sit in a general fund. Parents need a way to be able to allow their kids a great education. Many of us haven't proceeded helping our kids get the education we need because of finances. If the funds followed the student that is where the child is getting educated and should get the support. This may be exactly what we need to get back on track so that the good teachers and administrators will rise to the top to be competitive for our kiddos. Why should the public school receive the funds per child but if the child goes elsewhere for education that money doesn't go near the child's education. Just in a general fund.

Name: Rachelle Custer

Comment: As a parent of 3 public school students (middle, jr high and high school) and 2 that have graduated from public schools. One of which now works in the public school system, I am against school vouchers. Private schools are not held to the same accountability as public schools. I strongly believe that quality public schools are vital to the health of our community. Please focus on improving our public schools that are already accessible to everyone, and have been underfunded for years.

Name: Ed Myers

Comment: I'd say it'd be best to say no to vouchers. If parents want their children in private school they will find a way to do it without the assistance of vouchers. I recently moved back to my hometown of Ames, Iowa after spending the last 19 years on the Mississippi Gulf Coast because my marriage sent me there. My estranged wife Maribel and I enrolled our son Daniel in Catholic school. And, we did it very easily without receiving vouchers from the state. If parents want their children to have a private education they will find a way to do it. My younger sister Lisa and her husband Joe enrolled their kids in Catholic education when they lived in Minneapolis, MN. I asked Lisa once if she favored vouchers. She said if it helped the public

schools it would be great. Because the public schools need all the help they can get. And, I told Lisa that wasn't the case with vouchers. Vouchers meant the state would give you money to send your kids to Catholic schools. And, Lisa said they didn't need vouchers because the school tuition was tax deductible. So in short Public money needs to be spent on public schools to make sure all their needs are met. And, to make sure the kids are getting the best education they can get. And, it's immoral and unethical to use the public money on private schools when the values of the private school is unknown. I know there are many private schools around that don't share the same values I do. In addition, I've heard comments from other parents that they chose private schools because they are private. And, accepting money from the state would be seen as inroads of the state to control private schools.

Name: Mike Ostbloom

Comment: The fact that we as citizens even have to comment on this to say how much we don't want this ridiculous and harmful voucher system the governor wants and has pushed for years just says how out of touch she really is. The only people who stand to benefit from this bill are the wealthy who are already able to afford to send their kids to private schools, who are not required to accept all students. In public schools we must accept all, regardless of academic level. At private schools you would struggle to find a single student on an IEP or 504 plan, this is because they will not take such students. It was a strong public school system that made the country as successful as it has been in the past. Under the governors plan we simply go back to feudalism where the wealthy get an education, while the rest of us must beg for their scraps.

Name: Julie Anderson

Comment: Please vote no on the Voucher Bill. Public Education is just that! For the public. We have amazing public schools who already struggle with the lack of funds. Private schools are a choice. If parents choose this path for their children, then they are responsible for paying for it. There are so many special services that are available to them, not to mention extracurricular programs. Please vote NO. Thank you, Sincerely, Julie Anderson

Name: Mary Jensen

Comment: We (parents, future parents, grandparents, Democrats, Republicans) can not allow our public education system to weaken by allowing public funding to be given to private schools through vouchers. We must come together on this issue and say NO to vouchers!

Name: Julie Anderson

Comment: Please vote no on the Voucher Bill. Public Education is just that! For the public. We have amazing public schools who already struggle with the lack of funds. Private schools are a choice. If parents choose this path for their children, then they are responsible for paying for it. There are so many special services that are available to them, not to mention extracurricular programs. Please vote NO. Thank you, Sincerely, Julie Anderson

Name: Angela V

Comment: I strongly urge you to vote against the school vouchers. I believe in our public schools since they allow students to get a diverse education (well as diverse as rural Iowa can be anyway before the governor turns us into the next Florida). Plus private schools can turn away ANY student, whether they are bringing public money with them or not. What about all the special needs kids who require services? I don't see the private schools rolling out the red carpet for them. The voucher system would be such a detriment to our public school system by taking away much needed funds from it. Let's give our public schools and teachers a vote of confidence by not allowing this program. Our public school teachers already work magic with the little resources given to them as is. Also, if a kid wants to go to another school, there is always open enrollment has been in place for years. Legislators need to listen to the

people they represent and not just checkmark the governors demands from her state address. There is a reason why vouchers havent gone through twice already the majority are NOT for it. Public funds for public schools.

Name: Elizabeth Lippert Kane

Comment: I am writing in favor of public education dollars stay with. The public school sector. This is Hard because I have 4 children all who have or continue to attend private Catholic school but transition to the public school in HS. We also currently have a strong history of working with the public schools . I am a strong supporter of private school education and even school choice but if we remove public dollars from public schools our public schools will only continue to suffer. For some/many private school is a choice. It can be expensive but there is financial aide available . The point of public schools was to provide a high quality education to all students but as money has been removed, misused etc schools are not keeping up. Taking more money from schools and giving them to other learning environments may not benefit the general population. Voucher would have helped pay for my childrens education or paid for it differently but at somepoint I also have to social responsibility to support public education and the schools in my community.

Name: Barbara johanns

Comment: Iowa should invest in public schools. Vouchers creates an environment where taxpayer money is routed away from public schools, which will cause them to fail. Iowa was a leader in education in the past. The continued underfunding has caused a severe decline in the quality of education. Continuing that trend is a disservice to Iowans. Please adequately fund public schools. Charter and private schools will continue to thrive, and since most are forprofit, can continue to offer scholarships to the underprivileged, as they already do.

Name: Joseph Uhl

Comment: This bill is a disaster for the Iowa public school system. One of the reasons my family moved here from Illinois was for the great public education that would be available to our children. People in favor of this bill have commented that the school system "isn't what it used to be" compared to when they went to public school in Iowa years ago. If that's the case, how is further cutting funding to public schools going to help? What about schools in rural areas that will close due to lack of funding where private schools aren't an option? This bill will only exacerbate the issues we are currently seeing in rural public schools. Do not vote for this bill.

Name: Mary Forney

Comment: Public monies belong to public education! I attended small public school for 12 years, chose to teach in private religious education for 32 years, but never once considered that any parent (myself included) would think they didn't have a choice in education! Our public schools are fine schools ... taking money away from them for an invented issue named "Parental Choice" will only deplete our struggling rural schools, divide our urban schools into economic levels even more, and create an even deeper hole in the pitiful support provided Iowa education. Our state plunging in education rankings is an embarrassment caused by the lack of foresight in Republican administration. The braindrain in Iowa continues. I beg you to bring honor through effective and strong education for ALL students back to Iowa. Do NOT send this bill forward. The educational future of our children must mean more to you all than this political game you are playing?

Name: GERALENE SHUCK

Comment: Public funds are for public schools. As a state we want our young adults to stay or come to Iowa. Why would they when the public education system that is the very reason they came or stayed will be downgrading itself with taking funds from the public schools. If parents want their child go to a private school let them pay for it. I

shouldnt have to.

Name: Jessica Galasso

Comment: This is harmful to children and public educators. Public dollars should always be for public education. Utilizing public dillards for Private vouchers will continue to decimate an already underfunded Iowa public education.

Name: Tammy Gertsen

Comment: Living in rural Iowa I have attended several school board meetings. One instance they invited a legislator to talk about this Voucher proposal. It broke my heart to hear the board members tell the legislator how difficult it was right now to meet budgets. They went into deep detail the areas where they had to cut and how if Vouchers became part of the deal, what they would have to continue to cut or worse, remove. And all this legislator could say was you are doing a great job. In other words, I care less what happens to this school district as long as I do what the Governor tells me to do. Listen up legislators. Rural Iowa cannot afford this Voucher/School Choice proposition.

Name: Barbara Gronstal

Comment: Governor Reynolds, in her State of the State Address, stated that her agenda for this session was child centered. I disagree. Her plan for a voucher system to divert public tax dollars to private schools is the opposite of child friendly and begs elitism. Instead of school access for all it results in a form of segregation all too reminiscent of our past. I realize that individual students have individual needs but let's not segregate them into a hierarchical system that promotes differences instead of understanding, empathy, compassion and positive inquisitive learning. Our Public Schools are for everyone. Let's fully fund them and allow them the means to respond to student's special needs. Let's make our Public School System the CHILDREN'S School of Choice.

Name: Roxanne Aden

Comment: My daughter currently attends a public school. I cannot afford to send her to the private school in our community. I believe every parent should be given the resources to make a choice to send their child to a school of their choice! We all pay taxes whether you have children or not. Parents should have a choice!

Name: Sarah Abdouch

Comment: Despite the engagement of a minority of public educators and unions whose personal interests seem to come before children's every time, the vast majority of Iowans I've talked to understand that this is not about public schools, it's about children's rights and the rights of parents. Why should parents of low income be relegated to failing schools? The wealthy, today, can choose to send their children wherever they want. Honestly, the comments in here about how people should have the means to send their children to private school if that's how they want them educated come across very much as "let them eat cake". The comments about protecting public schools and "fully funding" them only serve to highlight the institutional centrality of the objections; these aren't arguments about the wellbeing of the students, they're arguments about the maintenance of a failing status quo, a status quo whose only answer is, ironically, more and more money. I would highly encourage the legislature to support school choice measures. It makes sense, it's supported by most average Iowans, and it's the best choice for students and families.

Name: Samantha Thorpe

Comment: I am opposed to SSB 1022. Tax payer money should fund public schools. This bill supports systematically and rapidly defunding our public schools in favor of private options that will not be required to meet the same accountability requirements as public schools must. This bill will hurt children with disabilities by ensuring public schools cannot fund services they need. This bill will also cause more rural schools to

consolidate because they won't have enough funding to pay for their infrastructure much less teachers. Our Governor and Legislators should not be trying to fail our public schools in order to privatize public education. Instead, with 90percent of Iowa kids attending public schools, we should continue to value and strengthen public education. It's one of the reasons people move to Iowa. If public education crumbles, it will negatively impact Iowa economically as well as educationally.

Name: Christy Gotto

Comment: As a low income parent, and fellow taxpayer in Iowa, I have children that have been fully through public education and I have children that are currently going through private education. Our family truly has to make sacrifices to send our children to private school. If I had the choice to do it again, I would have chosen to send my older children through private education as well. I have been way more impressed with what the private schools have done for educating my children than the public schools. On top of that, the private schools do better education for way less money than what is spent on public schools. My question is why? The recent numbers I have seen locally is the private schools cost per child is in the \$89,000 per student. Public schools per student expense is between 12,500 and 15,000 per student per year. Throwing more money at the public schools is not the answer. They need to be more efficient and effective at what they are doing. My tax dollars should be supporting my child just as much as anyone else.

Name: Ashley Swett

Comment: Public dollars for public schools. I am a public school teacher with two children in public school. The voucher system is not ok. There isnt enough infrastructure for people to go to private schools. There arent enough quality teachers in general. I am not sad we are moving out of state this summer.

Name: Krysten Reid

Comment: Public money should not be spent on private schools. Teachers are so under paid and underappreciated. We need to spend the money on increased salaries for teachers so that we can have high quality instruction in every public school. I don't want my tax dollars being spent on faith based curriculum that may be rubbish. I am against this.

Name: Nicole Cody

Comment: Public money is for public schools. Public schools serve the VAST majority of Iowa's population. They need support, increased funding and the ability to serve each and every student that walks through the door. This voucher bill moves public money out of the public schools and will IMMEDIATELY cause great harm to one of our state's best assets our public education. This is not hyperbole. Schools are functioning on shoe string budgets now when they lose that per pupil money, schools will close, staff will be cut, programs will cease to exist.

Name: David Weaver

Comment: I am against giving taxpayer dollars to private education. Public schools have oversight with the spending of all tax dollars, in the form of school board members that are elected to office, and they hold meetings on a regular schedule that is publicly available, and attendance is open to the public. Private schools do not require that any leaders are publicly elected (therefore accountable to taxpayers). Private schools are not required to hold leadership meetings in public. Private schools are not required (that I am aware of) to publicly share their budgets. Private schools are not, in my understanding, required to accept any/all students that apply. Selective admittance is a hallmark of private education (and, private institutions are not required to give ANY reason for denial of acceptance). Private schools, in short, are not democratic. Taxpayer dollars should not go to private schools for private education. Educational Savings Accounts, vouchers, etc. that subvert the good stewardship of public tax funds is not in the best interest of Iowans. Thank you to the committee members that have the best interests of Iowa's future at heart.

- Name:** Eileen Finnegan
- Comment:** Public money is for public schools. Dont siphon money away from public schools.
- Name:** Daniel McCurley
- Comment:** This copycat legislation has clearly and repeatedly FAILED in other states. Now our smallminded, greedy, sycophantic 'leaders' are trotting it out here to increase their hold on power and undermine our futures. None of this is in service to our state, our greater good or our children's futures. Keep public dollars in public schools hell, you could even do something useful like adequately fund them! Stop trying to filter public dollars to your unaccountable sham schools and actual do something worthwhile with your lives.
- Name:** Holly Cully
- Comment:** Thank you for giving us the opportunity to move our tax dollars to where we would like our kids to attend school. The pressure that competition creates is good. If our district can return to a neutral and non political learning environment then we may be compelled to keep them in public schools. If not, then well move our kids and tax dollars to a school that wont teach ideologies that go against our beliefs.
- Name:** Ben Whitver
- Comment:** As an Iowa tax payer I do NOT want my taxes to fund private schools. This is a blatant attempt to steal tax money to fund special interest groups, in the name of protecting children shameful. It does nothing but to further Kim Reynolds mission to stir up hate and pit neighbor against neighbor. Public Money For Public Schools
- Name:** Mona Gude
- Comment:** As a retired educator, I am totally opposed to the voucher program. Public Schools are the foundation of a community. Please realize how this will hurt our towns and neighborhoods. Public Schools support learning for ALL individuals. We need them to stay strong. Public schools and public golf courses allow ALL to attend. Private schools like country clubs can pick who they will allow in to them. Residents can freely choose to go to them instead of the public onethat choice already exists. As a society we should not pay for that decision. Please Vote NO on this Voucher bill. Thank you, Mona Gude
- Name:** Cyndi Boertje
- Comment:** Please do NOT make poor and barelymakingit families pay for wealthier students to go to private schools. You are merely moving money upwards and draining the public schools of the funds they desperately need to educate ALL students no matter how wealthy or not they are. Taking funds FROM the public schools will also hurt the private schools because private schools rely on public schools for some activities and events. This is so shortsighted and detrimental to the status the Iowa schools used to hold. Taking money away will only make them worse. This bill is making a problem worse not working to fix a problem.
- Name:** Teresa Baustian
- Comment:** Please think about the communities, small towns that would be left behind by this attack on the public education system. The small towns would be adversely affected first. Consolidation, longer commutes... until it simply isn't feasible for families to live there, any longer. No community school and then loss of any sense of community that comes together for their children's sports or musical activities. This bill touts a "choice" but the choice that it will force will be to leave small towns that no longer offer anything for families.
- Name:** Christina Kotouc
- Comment:** Public dollars for public schools. Private schools pick who their students are and can

and will discriminate against students with disabilities. Only 2% of Iowa children can even potentially attend a private school in Iowa. By passing a school voucher bill, you are taking funding from 98% of Iowa's students. Vouchers will do more harm to Iowa's schools and Iowa's students than good. Let's fully fund public education and see Iowa rise back to the top, instead of fall further in rankings. We used to be first in the nation in education, but we have lost that integrity with Kim Reynolds' leadership and a supermajority of Republicans in the House and the Senate.

Name: Julie Montgomery

Comment: Asking for vouchers is asking for fractured communities. Its asking for a wider gap between the Haves and the HaveNots. A voucher system will not level the playing field nor will it encourage healthy/legitimate competition. Because as many people have already explained, private schools get to play by a different set of rules and get to cherry pick the students they want to admit. And no matter how the funds are divided (whether some of the per pupil funds stay with the public schools or all of it follows the student to the private), we cannot create two separate systems and fund them both adequately. Its just not possible. Unlike many other states that have considered vouchers, we have a strong education system. Lets not ruin it. Rather than give up on the public schools and create a new, unequal, system, stick around and do the hard work. There is more that unites us than divides us, we just have to have the will, patience, and communication skills to work together.

Name: Kathryn Kaul-Goodman

Comment: As an Iowan I am 100% against school vouchers. Giving money to rich people in Des Moines who could already afford private school if they wish is not a wise use of Iowan taxpayers' dollars and doesn't help the kids who need it the most. It's also not a fair playing field since private schools don't have to take every student like public schools do. It seems to be more about getting taxpayer dollars into private hands than helping kids, as I saw first hand when I was flying home from a work trip in November and sat by a businessman who said he was coming to Des Moines for the first time to look for an investment property for a charter school.I strongly urge you to NOT support vouchers.

Name: Donald Campbell

Comment: Every year I find myself emailing my legislators urging them to listen to their constituents and to fully fund public education and vote no on the education savings account (vouchers). Year after year Iowans tell you that they don't believe in vouchers and that they don't want them, yet every year our Governor tries to push them through. The absolute arrogance this year to try again and even increase the amount of funding to the education savings account program is a slap in the face to Iowans. WE DON'T WANT VOUCHERS. Please vote NO.

Name: Angie Falco

Comment: I want to thank this committee for fighting for parents and For giving us options for our kids education. Thank you for challenging the status quo that does not work and opening the doors for opportunity for our kids in Iowa. We can do better for our kids.

Name: Maureen White

Comment: Our governor and legislators are elected to work for the people. The majority of Iowans have repeatedly said they want strong public education. Instead they've gotten underfunded schools, attacks on public school educators, micromanagement of what and how to teach and numerous schemes to divert tax dollars and students from public schools. Our public schools are not failing elected officials are failing them. This scheme to funnel hundreds of millions of dollars in additional subsidies to private education, on top of the current \$50+ million annual support in direct payments, reimbursements and tax credits for nonpublic education, is totally unacceptable. Our state resources are limited. Pitting funding for private schools against public schools will be especially harmful to the rural areas of Iowa. This

latest proposal (like previous ones) would only benefit families in 88 of the 327 school districts. The other 239 don't have a private school building in the district. The new Archdiocese of Des Moines (71 schools) policies institutionalizing discrimination toward students and staff based on gender identification, which other Catholic school systems may choose to adopt, are a perfect example of why tax dollars should not go to private schools. Public schools must follow laws and Department of Education policy that prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender or sex. Of the 191 nonpublic schools in Iowa, all but a handful identify as Catholic or Christian. Iowans choose whether or not to follow a religion, but aid for religious schools forces all taxpayers to subsidize religious indoctrination in those schools, including those that openly discriminate. The state should not be in the business of promoting private, religionbased education. There are multiple additional reasons why legislators should not take action on this bill or any bill like it. Listen to your constituents rather than blindly following extremist ideology. Stop this bill now.

Name: Arlene McAtee

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill. Public dollars should fund public education. This effort to divert resources from public education, highly financed by out of state organizations, does not translate to parental choice. It is well established that many counties in Iowa have no private options. In many others the private options are controlled by particular faithbased groups meaning they are not a universal option and is a further attempt to blur the separation of church and state. I came from a poor family, spent time in foster care and the public school system was my salvation and allowed me to have the foundation for a successful adult life. I had two years of private school education that DID NOT. I stand with the majority of Iowans regarding the diversion of public funds to private schools. Strengthen our public schools. Do not acquise to outside groups or a minority of Iowans on this issue. Thank you for the opportunity to share this with you.

Name: Megan Knight

Comment: Iowans deserve wellfunded PUBLIC schools. I have worked in education in the state for over two decades, and it has been devastating to watch the Reynolds administration carve away at our oncegreate schools. No to voucherspublic taxpayer dollars are for public schools, full stop.

Name: Lisa Rock

Comment: As an Iowa taxpayer and Marion County resident, I urge you to oppose the use of public funding for school vouchers. Taxpayer dollars should not be diverted from our public schools and used to fund private education. This is not about choice, it is about protecting and rebuilding Iowa's proud history of public school excellence, crucial educational resources for rural as well as urban communities, and a system that provides for accountability and transparency.

Name: Shelley Bradfield

Comment: I do not support SSB 1022. Public money should be used for public education, not private schools. Private schools are not required to accept all applicants they can be exclusive regarding religion, race, gender, class, disability, sexuality etc. Public money should be used to fund chronically underfunded public schools, not given to private schools that are already supported by alumni, donors, and high tuition dollars. Public money should be used to attract and retain qualified and excellent teachers, and not encourage the very best teachers to move to private schools. And public money should be used to ensure high quality rural schools that are accessible to people who live in rural areas in Iowa, not spent on private schools in suburbia.

Name: Chris Skuster

Comment: Our founding fathers declared a separation of Church and state. As a Christian who respects the constitution, I am concerned that taking public tax dollars out of public

schools and putting them into private, religious schools goes against an important principle that our state and country were founded on. How will you make sure you're being respectful of our constitutional ideals with school vouchers if you're putting public money into religious schools?

Name: MARTHA POPSON

Comment: Please reconsider the plan to take money from public schools and give it to private schools. As a Catholic, I have always OPPOSED doing this. Public schools have been the bedrock of America's move to educate all children, including those who do not have either the money or the transportation to go to a private school. For the ordinary American family, public schools have been a meeting place for citizens and their children to get to know people, young and old, from diverse backgrounds. I especially fear for the future of children with special needs. Do not leave them behind. Thank you.

Name: Tatum Watkins

Comment: Public dollars are for public schools, end of story. Where I live, there is one private k8 school, beyond that the nearest private school is over an hour away. Taking money away from rural school districts and leaving many with no better alternative will have detrimental effects.

Name: Megan Suhr

Comment: I am opposed to using public tax payer dollars to further benefit private religious academies. The impact to Marion County public schools could be a \$4million diversion from public schools to the private academies.

Name: Susan Junge

Comment: I have two children in Iowa public schools. It is more important than ever that public money stay in public schools. I say this as someone who attended private schools K12. My own experience does not mean that we should be taking away the limited resources we have away from our public schools that are required to accept all students.

Name: Jeffery Cook

Comment: I am a retired public school teacher and administrator. I am against vouchers taking money away from public schools. I am a life long Republican and have always voted for the party but this passes I will not again vote Republican and will do my best to convince others not to either! Public funds for Public Schools!

Name: Douglas Black

Comment: A simple question: How much welfare does the wealthy need? In my lifetime the amount of wealth transferred from middle class pockets to the top earners is significant and unsustainable. May I remind you that this is how empires fail the continued weakening of the middle class will only result in a weaker country and hasten our demise as a world power. So, you want that to happen? Keep it up. You want a strong country? Ask yourselves on every piece of legislation how does this strengthen the middle class? based on TRUE FACTS and Unfiltered information. You don't need a Ph. D. to tell you this action does not strengthen the middle class and only goes to weaken this country. So go ahead, continue this transfer of wealth from those that have not to those that have.. but remember: everyone drowns on a sinking ship..

Name: Kate McLean

Comment: Public dollars for public schools. State funding should not go to schools that do not have to accept all students or adhere to the same standards as public schools.

Name: Alicia Bellville

Comment: Give to the funding, resources, and support to public education where the students and educators who need the support the most will be. By not fully funding and supporting public education, you are not funding and supporting special education. You will be taking opportunities and resources away from students who need and/or can't afford what they need.

Name: Louise Esveld

Comment: I am writing in strong opposition to SSB1022. After years of inadequate funding for public schools, the governor wants to give any student \$7,598, regardless of how wealthy that students family is, who chooses to attend a private school. 1.Public dollars belong to public schools,2.In Marion County alone based on current numbers, the Governors plan would millions of dollars from our already underfunded public schools to private schools. 3.There is no equivalency between the expectations for public schools versus those of private schools. Our per pupil spending for public schools is based on public accountability for public schools to our elected officials and state standards and the expectation that every student is served regardless of need. Private schools do not have the same accountability to me as a taxpayer. 4.The Governors school choice plan will benefit urban areas located in proximity to private school options while disadvantaging rural students and rural communities where choices are limited or nonexistent.5.The Governors school choice plan will disproportionately benefit wealthier families who can already better afford to pay for and transport their children to and from private schools.6.The Governors school choice plan will disproportionately burden lower income and workingclass families. Iowas current tax plan enacted under the last legislature means that, while a large proportion of private school attendees will be from higher income families the tax burden of paying for each of these higher income private school students will fall unfairly on the rest of us. 7.Entities from outside Iowa are already scouting locations for charter and private schools. They are more than happy to offer education for profit and take our tax dollars outside the state. We should be investing our state tax dollars in Iowas public schools.Iowans already have school choice, whether through open enrollment or the decision to home school or pay for a private education. Iowans are empowered through school board elections, parent advisor groups, and requirements that schools involve parents in most educational decisions. This bill is a an outright and irresponsible attack on the most treasured public institution and building block of our states economy, culture, and future. Say NO to SSB1022.

Name: Sarah Smith

Comment: I am an Iowa taxpayer and I oppose this bill. Public money should be put back into public schools, where ALL Iowa children are served. Private schools do not serve all Iowa children, they can deny entry due to past grades, previous testing results, behavior problems or discipline issues, and attendance. Private schools are also not required to follow special education requirements and are exempt from most state and federal laws. Private schools do not serve all of Iowas children. Private schools should use private funds. You have the choice now on where to send your child to school with open enrollment. Public schools do not pick and choose who they will teach, they teach ALL Iowa children.

Name: Cheryl Binzen

Comment: I am very much not in favor of taxpayer money funding private schools. With open enrollment there is already significant school choice in Iowa. The bill under discussion favors the few not the good of the whole...or even the good of the most. Private schools have no financial accountability to the taxpayers. Private schools choose which students will be accepted so not open to all. Iowa could once again be #1 in the nation in education when properly funded. Thank you

Name: Brenda Barton

Comment: The voucher system is just a way to extract public money and transfer it to private

hands. I oppose this measure.

Name: Ann R

Comment: Dear legislators, Public money is for public schools seems to be the catchphrase for the opponents of this bill. This is OUR money, and it should follow the student. If public schools are what they are supposed to be doing, parents will not want to pull their kids out of them. Every student dear the opportunity to be in the best educational setting for them. They shouldnt be doomed to remain in a bad public school environment just because they cant afford otherwise. Children of Iowa deserve this bill.

Name: Anna Schuessler

Comment: I was a public school teacher for many years. The dollars available for student programming grew tighter and tighter every year. It makes no sense to use Federal dollars for private schools. They need all the support they can get to serve all children especially those with disabilities. The quality of our education system has been declining. Starving it of funds will certainly not improve it.

Name: Cynthia Newton

Comment: As a public school educator that has worked in both large and small communities, including Chicago, Los Angeles and now a rural Iowa community upon returning to the state I was born, raised and educated in, I urged Public Dollars be spent on Public Schools. We are a state supported by the small farm communities that are at our core. Taking money from those already underfunded areas will ruin what is left of a once amazing Public Education System.

Name: Kahri Plein

Comment: Vote NO on this bill as it will have very real and catastrophic consequences for our Iowa students. Tax dollars should be spent on our public schools that are required to serve ALL Iowa students and are held accountable to tax payers. The narrative that vouchers are about funding students, not systems is false. Vouchers will simply fund a different, private system that will not be required to educate ALL Iowa students or be upheld to the same standards and accountability measures. Please use our tax payer dollars to improve our public school system, a benefit to all tax payers! We are currently experiencing a huge teacher shortage and this bill will only exacerbate the problem. Additionally, Division III of this bill is illadvised. Allowing categorical funds to be used for things outside of their category will be crippling to services such as gifted education. These identified students have a right, as all Iowa students do, to services that meet their needs and allow them to be successful in their educational setting. While teacher salaries definitely need an increase, taking that money from categorical funds will only hurt students. With a state budget surplus, and the millions in savings from NOT creating vouchers, surely we can fund teacher salaries another way.

Name: Lori Witt

Comment: I do not believe it is right for public taxpayer dollars to be used for enrollment in private K12 schools. Taxpayer dollars paid by the public are meant for public schools. I am a member of the public, and I do not want my taxes to fund private K12 education. If the Iowa legislature votes for public taxpayer dollars to fund private schools, I would expect that those schools be held to the same accountability standards as public schools, such as providing education for students with disabilities, preK classes, and all the other requirements that public schools are expected to require. Thank you for accepting comments!

Name: Teri Walsh

Comment: I was fortunate to attend a private school. However, I do not support vouchers or ESA. Any private school worth attending has programs available to help families

who need it. Additionally, the school I attended partnered with the public school on some programs. Fully funding public schools is the best choice for Iowa. Its sad that Iowa was once the standard for public education and now its struggling to keep up. Its time to invest in the future of the state and the education of its sons and daughters.

Name: Judith Hunter

Comment: As a long time supporter of public education (former teacher, former school board member, chair of school foundation), I am horrified at the past chronic underfunding of public education and the future harm this voucher bill will inflict. Our public schools need more support so they can educate all the childrennot just those in urban areas or those wealthy enough to afford exclusive private schools. Our teachers, administrators and locally elected school boards, all of which are accountable to the taxpayers, deserve more funding, not less.

Name: Heather Wachendorf

Comment: I am against vouchers. Those who wish to send their children to private schools must find their own resources. The purpose of public schools is to ensure that ALL children, regardless of where they live or how much money their family has, are able to have access to quality education. Education is the path to a better Iowa. Put more funding into public schools and prepare our children so they can achieve their full potential.Listen to the people of Iowa we don't want vouchers.

Name: Sam Thorpe

Comment: I am a parent of two kids in the public school system. I went to both public and private schools in New Mexico and a public school in Oklahoma. I was so impressed by how much Iowans supported their public schools that I stayed in Iowa after moving here for college. I AM OPPOSED to PRIVATIZING public education to benefit the few and ensure the rest receive a substandard education. What will be left of our public school system once \$100 million goes to private schools after years of defunding them? Many privateschool parents can pay for a religious education (which is the predominate private choice in Iowa). Our taxpayer money will go into their kids' college funds as the rest of Iowa students' expense. There is also little transparency in how taxpayer money in private schools will be used. They can also choose NOT to take students with disabilities unlike public schools. As a tax payer, I should get to decide what private organizations I want to fund. PLEASE SAY NO TO SSB 1022. Iowa's future depends on strong public schools if we want to continue to attract outofstaters like me who love Iowa's SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Name: Hilary Klyn

Comment: As a public school teacher, this issues worries me. Public dollars are for public schools. Parents already have school choice they can send their child to public or private schools. The difference is, private schools can turn down children for a variety of reasons. Why would public dollars, go to private schools, that can in turn discriminate against families who dont align with their mission or vision?

Name: Jim Schreitmueller

Comment: I'm asking the state legislature to please vote no on this bill to establish vouchers for private schools. It is a misuse of our tax dollars to give monetary handouts to private schools that often do not even have to provide the services and burdens that are placed upon the public school system. Don't use our money to actively harm our state's public school systems to benefit a small minority of Iowans. I'm tired of seeing the quality of our state's public education slip in its rankings, seeing rural schools close, and seeing native Iowans who have trained as teachers in our public universities leave to teach in other states like Minnesota, Wisconsin, or Illinois since the state of public education and teacher pay here in Iowa has fallen behind so much.Decline is a choice. Please don't approve this bill.

Name: Jerry Anderson

Comment: Stop bowing down to the far right agenda of Charles Koch and his desire to destroy all public interests. Iowans dont want their tax monies going to private education. Start supporting all Iowans and stop selling your soul for the greed of money and power from far right fanatics like Charles Koch and his network.

Name: Steve Martin

Comment: I strongly oppose this bill and action. Funding for public education in Iowa is on a downward spiral and this will exacerbate an already badly declining funding problem for our public schools. Every student who leaves public education will reduce the funding for public school education by approximately \$6400. For many public schools in Iowa, which are very small, this loss of funding can be and probably will be catastrophic to them. Yes, there are richer school districts who will probably be able to endure these funding cuts with significant cuts to their educational programs, but for these smaller schools, of which there are many in Iowa, it could mean the difference between closing the school or remaining open. Secondly, I strongly oppose this bill and action because a primary driver for this is to allow families to use taxpayer money to support religious based private schools. This bill and action will create public funding of religious activities. Public funding should never directly be used to support religion the way that this bill will. In particular, the most dominant religious private schools are the Catholic schools, which of course are Christian schools, so not only will this bill use public tax money to support religion, it will support a particular version of religion, Christianity, which of course is not only inappropriate and perhaps illegal, but is an unfair support of anyone religion over the many that there are. Finally, as a university professor here in the state of Iowa, I have taught university engineering students who have been homeschooled and educated in religious K through 12 schools and I have been appalled at their lack of rigor in science and STEM fields. For example, many of these students are indoctrinated in the religious belief that the earth is only 6000 years old. Of course this is absolutely, positively, and completely wrong. But yet, these students hold strongly to this incorrect belief and they carry that belief into their other studies of other areas. We are doing our students a severe disservice by allowing them to be taught such completely false aspects about science. This public support of religious education will have the unintended, or, perhaps from the republican perspective, intended consequence of severely reducing the STEM education of our students in Iowa. Of course, this is perhaps exactly what the Republican Party wants. I presume they want this in part because it will further their religious indoctrination of students in Iowa to promote the religious agenda of their party.

Name: Emily Campbell

Comment: Diverting our tax dollars to fund private education will erode our public schools and hurt rural schools and communities the hardest. Rural schools are the life blood of those communities and provide jobs for many occupations beyond teaching the economic effect will be catastrophic. The erosion of those schools will have a profound detrimental impact on the students they serve. Private schools do not have to accommodate for special needs students and can refuse their admittance Free Appropriate Public Education is a hallmark of our democracy and this bill desecrates that.

Name: Brad Thomas

Comment: Attention, public schools! These are your consequences for years of indoctrinating our kids instead of teaching the basic and necessary educational requirements.

Name: Mary D Miller

Comment: Strongly opposed to school vouchers! The amount of aid now going to public schools has not kept up with inflation. This will be equivalent to rich get richer on the backs

of the poor and middle class. It is obvious that these private schools will end up in the hands of wealthy, mostly out of state investors who will become richer on the backs of Iowa taxpayers. If the Governor thinks Iowas public schools are so bad why arent you legislators asking for more public school dollars to raise wages and offer more courses? Why do you want to run public schools in the ground? This is a death knell for small towns who are struggling to survive the way it is. Please take a look at the # of people moving out of state and mostly take note of the reasons. The biggest reason stated is they are no longer proud of the educational system in our state and secondly they are no longer proud of the state of Iowa. If legislators cant start listening to ALL constituents, its a very sad day. Soon Iowa will be left with nothing but very old people who cant afford to move. Wake up before its too late and represent all Iowans. Who is paying for Gov Reynolds school voucher ads on TV?

Name: Kathy Smit

Comment: Public money should go to public schools. Represent your constituents of the state of Iowa and vote against this bill!

Name: Byron Tabor

Comment: I do not believe vouchers for private schools are a good use of public funds.

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Comment: I do not believe vouchers for private schools are a good use of public funds.

Name: Greg Hetrick

Comment: I do not support ESAs/Vouchers, whatever they are being sold as. Public schools serve all students, private schools do not. This is not parental choice because private schools can pick and choose which students they accept. Private schools can't support students with IEPs and private schools are not held to the same standard as public schools. I encourage a no vote on this bill.

Name: Katherine Fromm

Comment: The Governor will stop at nothing to get this. She parrots some line about uniting Iowans, and then proceeds to do the one thing that will really divide us. Her mantra is 'choice.' She is willing to let wealthy Iowans have hard won tax money to send their children to a privileged private school. This will hurt city schools, where the parents and citizens are unlikely to support the Governor. In its own way, this voucher system will contribute to further disintegration of education for low income children, and often children of color.

Name: Bob Brown

Comment: I am opposed to SSB 1022, Student's First Act. SSB 1022 does not require private schools to operate under the same rules and regulations that promote transparency, equity, etc. that public schools must function within. The Governor implied it is not an "us versus them" issue. If private schools receive public funds through education savings accounts then Legislators and the Governor must require private schools to function under the same rules and regulations as public schools to demonstrate there is no "us versus them".

Name: Barbara Clark

Comment: Public funds being used for private schools have no business at all! I am the proud product of public schools in Iowa and am very concerned about how our education here has gone down over the years. I used to be so proud of Iowa as first in the nation in education! I can no longer say that's the case. Please stop trying to spin this as a school choice. People who already send their students to private schools have made that choice already and have the resources available to do so, yet they will certainly take advantage of the proposed vouchers. Those who don't have the resources or who live in areas with only public schools available need thriving public

education accessible and available to them! Moving public funds to support private schools will only make the resources more limited for our public schools and students will suffer. In addition, as a taxpayer, I dont want my taxes being used to support private education!

Name: Paul Deaton

Comment: I oppose SSB1022, The Students First Act, as written. I was educated first through twelfth grades in a private school without direct public funding. Our church paid the entire cost of physical plant and operating costs, including teachers. If the current Republican majority campaigned on change as outlined in SSB1022, and were elected because of it, some form of the legislation may pass despite protests. The bill's language was filed just this week. I encourage Republicans to work with Democrats to make the final product much better than it is today. Consider and accept amendments now, and during debate. If Iowa will go down this path and give public funds to private schools, inclusion of the broadest possible input is needed. There is no hurry to get this done. Take your time. Do what's right for Iowa. For me, that means rejecting the bill as written.

Name: Paige Crooks

Comment: Vote NO to this bill as it will have real and catastrophic consequences for our Iowa public education students. As a public school educator and a special needs parents, I firmly believe NO public tax dollars should go towards schools that are not required to adequately serve ALL children in our state.

Name: Ralph Rosenberg

Comment: I am the parent of two sons who attended K12 public schools, in addition to private religious education (which I appropriately paid out of my pocket. I benefitted from excellent K12 public education and from over 5 years of private religious school education (4 days/week, after public school). My parents were working class and paid for the religious school education. Please explain where accountability is for public money given to a private school, unless that is specifically written into the law. Please explain where legal protections will be put in place for transparency and accountability to prevent abuse, such as recently exposed in Missouri private school system/ Please require private schools to accept and accommodate all students, including but not limited to racial and cultural minorities and people with disabilities. Public schools do. If necessary, legislate accountability and enforcement for these reasonable civil rights protections in the area of education. 0

Name: Sheila Hraha

Comment: Iowans have made it clear we do NOT want vouchers! Taxpayers dollars already help fund private schools while public schools have been underfunded year after year. Parents have always had school choice. Please, please listen to Iowans and do what is necessary to strengthen public education in our state.SAY NO TO VOUCHERS!!!

Emails for all members of the Iowa Senate Education Committee

Copy and paste email list into a single email regarding any of the following bills:

Senate File 80

Senate File 167

Senate File 224

jim.carlin@legis.iowa.gov

claire.celsi@legis.iowa.gov

ken.rozenboom@legis.iowa.gov

amy.sinclair@legis.iowa.gov

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annette.sweeney@legis.iowa.gov

sarah.trone.garriott@legis.iowa.gov

brad.zaun@legis.iowa.gov

Name: Julie Powell-Mohr

Comment:

To Our Legislators--

I so trust that you have a vision for Iowa that supports families and children, that supports the education of our children. And on the surface vouchers do give some families private school options. But the deeper result is to undermine the public school foundation of our state, a foundation that is committed to providing for all Iowa's children, and it's a life-giving foundation for Iowa. What happens when we don't do that? What happens when we pull the foundation out from beneath our house?

The private schools are already well-served with public monies.

But the most crucial piece of this is the impact on rural school districts. Closed schools and merged districts mean dying communities. I have seen it and I know many of you have seen it, too.

Our kids know when we make them a priority in our public schools. They know what it feels like to be supported. Just go to the school concerts and plays and athletic events. Why do we do that? They know what it feels like when programs are cut.

Who are the students most likely to move out of Iowa? We absolutely must invest in all our kids. We need them to stay. Right now we are experiencing a shortage of teachers and healthcare workers—a shortage of workers. We must connect the dots—all of this is at stake when we don't invest in our most valuable resource—public education for all our kids.

Private schools don't have the well-being of all Iowa in mind—and the needs of all students who have desires to pursue opportunities in every imaginable field. What about students who want to learn about keeping the infrastructure of our state in good repair? Then there are students who want hands-on learning about trades and the needs of service industries. There is need for technical education and there are the needs that come with disabilities and poverty. We cannot afford a throwaway kind of thinking when it comes to our kids and educating them. We need all of them—we need all of them to be successful, contributing citizens of Iowa, and what better way to do that than to invest 100% in public education.

Please be good stewards. Vote no on voucher education plans.

Sincerely,

Julie Powell-Mohr
5200 Shriver Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50312

(515) 255-3789