

Hello. I am writing today as a lifelong lover of education, a late-in-life graduate degree-holding special educator, and a mother of two whose passion lies in ensuring equity in education. School choice is a misnomer presented as a gift to all. I ask you to please consider the inequities that will absolutely befall YOUR constituents' children and the ultimate irreparable damage to our public education system, not to mention contributing to an already dismal tax status if SB75 passes.

DISCRIMINATION: Vouchers are useless to a family who is unable to transport and who is unable to make up the difference in tuition costs. The reality is that the districts who, on paper, could benefit from such a "gift" are actually the ones whose residents would not be able to benefit.

CONTINUED CLASS SEPARATION: Vouchers will (and have, as has been demonstrated in other states that have failed in implementing them) provide families who can afford private school to receive, in essence, a discount. These are families who have already made the decision to part from public school, who have made the decision to send their children to schools that can choose who attends and who does not, who have chosen to separate their children from a general populace that promises richness in diversity.

MORE DISCRIMINATION: As has been demonstrated in other states that have attempted this practice, students with disabilities lose all protections provided by IDEA. This harkens back to a time when children were sent to institutions and forgotten if they had differences that educators didn't know how to educate.

LESS ACCOUNTABILITY: As has been demonstrated in every private school, educators are not held to the same standards that public school educators are. The lower standards here shout hypocrisy: we want the best for our students (at least I hope you do), and yet, we will continue to expect less of those educating them.

I love my job. It is by far the most difficult one I have ever had, and yet, every day, I have the opportunity to teach others how to be more accepting of those with disabilities. These lessons extend far beyond the classroom when we see our students caring for those who have less, for those who look different than they do. This job is made possible because the public schools have resources (albeit continuously dwindling). Continuing to gut a system that has the responsibility to educate YOUR future - to prepare your caretakers when you are unable to care for yourself, to plant seeds of exploration for those who will research protocol for your cancer treatment, to ensure we have adults capable of ensuring our economy does not fall into the depths of a depression that will cause you to lose things you hold dear promises a society that will continue to descend into one unable to progress.

Please, for the love of all that is right and just, be responsible to the majority of your tax-paying constituents. Focus your efforts on better equipping the schools that are already doing the work and doing it with far less than they should have to.