

Witness Signup List

First Name	Last Name	Position	Representing
Cindy	Barnard	Against	Taxpayers For Public Education

Text of Testimony

Thank you for your time and consideration of my written testimony. My name is Cindy Barnard. I reside in Steamboat Springs Colorado and I represent Taxpayers For Public Education. We are a 501c(4) organization. Our mission is to advocate for public education. I am writing today to oppose SB 21-037.

Our public schools of choice (community schools, magnet schools, charter schools, and alternative schools) are in dire need of investment and support. It is no surprise to this Legislature that our schools have been used to balance Colorado's budget and are underfunded by over \$1 billion. It is no surprise that the funding mechanism supporting our schools is inequitable. Covid-19 has exasperated that issue and provided a window to these inequities. It is no surprise that children have varying needs and that the cost to educate children differs by the needs of each child. Economies of scale are essential to meeting the needs of all school children. And adequate funding is critical to maintaining these economies of scale! Now is the time to provide support and investment to our schools.

The voucher defined in SB 21-037 uses COVID -19 as justification for its creation. The voucher would not only hand parents precious tax dollars earmarked for public education; it places the costly burden on school districts to carry out the voucher scheme.

The data is clear. Voucher programs do not improve academic success. Voucher programs have increased segregation. Voucher programs have been rife with fraud, found to lack accountability, and allow education tax dollars to be used to discriminate against children. Any scheme that would reduce funding to our public schools that educate 95% of Colorado's school children is unconscionable. □

I ask that you vote to oppose SB 21-037 and that you work to adequately and equitably fund Colorado's public schools.□

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Barnard
Taxpayers For Public Education
303-905-3803

Witness Signup List

Kelly

Pointer

Against

Self

Good afternoon. The past year has brought forward many challenges for Colorado's students, teachers, school administrators, and parents. I am a parent of two high school children.

I am against SB 21-037 (Student Equity Education Funding Programs). This bill is a voucher that uses COVID-19 as its justification and I am disappointed to see a pandemic used in this manner.

Passage of this bill would reduce funding to our already underfunded public schools. I cannot support giving public taxpayer dollars directly to individual parents at the expense of our state's public schools. Further, this bill's creation of a voucher for parents (equal to school districts' per pupil revenue) to be used at a private education provider if a district school has gone to remote learning for 30 days or more in the prior school year is something that I do not support.

This pandemic started just over a year ago. School districts did not want to shift from 100% in person learning to hybrid or remote learning. Districts must comply with local health department guidelines and they must provide a safe learning environment for students, teachers, and staff. There is no playbook for how to run a school district in a pandemic.

Please consider opposing SB 21-037. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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RICHAARD JOHNSON Against Self

I am writing in opposition to B 21-037- Student Equity Education Funding Programs - This bill would provide a voucher to parents equal to school districts' per pupil revenue to be used at a private education provider if the district school has gone to remote learning for 30 days or more in the prior school year.

If this bill were to become law, the already underfunded public schools in Colorado due to the pandemic would be negatively impacted even more by funneling taxpayer dollars to support private schools. The constitutional responsibility to provide a high quality education to the students in our state would be under even greater stress.

Although I no longer have children in school, as a taxpaying citizen in Colorado I believe I have an obligation to pay a fair share of taxes for the education of the children in my community and state that is under the oversight of a democratically elected school board. I am strongly opposed to using public dollars to support private schools.

When children take their vouchers in hand and trundle off to a private school, there is virtually no accountability regarding the quality of the education being provided, the certification of the teaching staff, or the curriculum that is being taught.

Children may belong to their parents, and if the parents want their children to receive private school education, that is their choice. But they should have to pay for it, not the taxpayers.

This bill appears to be a way to force public schools to re-open no matter the health risks to students, teachers, and staff. It is also one more sinister strategic step in the goal of those who wish to dismantle our system of public education.