

Bob Kaser
Castle Pines, Colorado

03/24/2016

Chairman Hill and Senators,

I am a 30 year Douglas County resident, a conservative voter, the father of a Special Education kid, and a past president of the Douglas County Educational Foundation.

This Voucher Bill has at least three substantial problems which justify killing it:

First, Proponents of Vouchers always talk about the positive, micro impact touting Choice, but fail to address the negative, macro impact. Every parent induced by this Bill, to have their child leave our great public and charter schools, those schools will lose their full PPR funding. Douglas County School District (Doug Co) as an example has 67,000 students, of which 500 were already accepted into their Voucher program. The Voucher impact of this type of Bill would be the loss of about \$7,000 PPR per those 500 kids obviously totaling \$3.5 million in just the first year. That \$3.5 million will come right off the top of the District's revenues and reduce the General Fund balance, since all of the expenses are already absorbed by the revenues of the remaining 66,500. There is no commensurate savings from 500 Voucher kids leaving Doug Co from the 91 schools and over 1,800 classrooms in the District. Not one teacher will be laid-off, not one classroom will be closed. The only thing that will have left Doug Co was \$3.5 million in revenues from this inducement Bill.

Second, this is an entitlement program for the wealthy. An independent study of the Doug Co Voucher program by the University of Colorado, determined that 53% of the 500 voucher families had annual household incomes exceeding \$100,000. This Bill will only subsidize wealthy families that can pay the "delta" between the Voucher and tuition charged by the private schools.

Third, this Bill favors "normal" kids and de facto discriminates against Special Education kids. The Federal – I.D.E.A., clearly states that parentally placed children in private schools do not have an individual entitlement to any or all of the services that the children would receive if enrolled in a public school. The sworn testimony by school Administrators in the Doug Co Voucher Court Case, confirmed their partner, Private Schools could and would discriminate against and/or reject kids with disabilities.

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This Bill is patently flawed for these reasons, let alone that it violates Article IX, Section 7 of the Colorado Constitution, which clearly directs that: (paraphrasing for time) The general assembly shall never make any appropriation, or pay from any public fund or moneys whatsoever, anything *in aid of* any church or sectarian society to help support or sustain any school, academy.

I ask you to at least wait until the current Doug Co voucher action, underway at the United States Supreme Court, is decided.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments. Please extinguish this Bill.

References

CFR § 300.137 Equitable services determined.

“(a) No individual right to special education and related services. No parentally-placed private school child with a disability has an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the child would receive if enrolled in a public school.”

CFR § 300.139 Location of services and transportation.

“(ii) LEAs are not required to provide transportation from the child’s home to the private school.”

Colo. Const. Art. IX, Section 7 (2014), Section 7. AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, SECTARIAN PURPOSE, FORBIDDEN

“Neither the general assembly, nor any county, city, town, township, school district or other public corporation, shall ever make any appropriation, or pay from any public fund or moneys whatever, anything in aid of any church or sectarian society, or for any sectarian purpose, or to help support or sustain any school, academy, seminary, college, university or other literary or scientific institution, controlled by any church or sectarian denomination whatsoever; nor shall any grant or donation of land, money or other personal property, ever be made by the state, or any such public corporation to any church, or for any sectarian purpose.”

As posted by The Douglas County School District 03-15-2016: “To comply with the Colorado Supreme Court’s current interpretation of Section 7 of Article IX in *Taxpayers for Public Education v. Douglas County School District*, 2015 CO 50, the District prohibits religious schools from participating in the School Choice Grant Program.”

Who Chooses and Why in a Universal Choice Scholarship Program: Evidence from Douglas County, Colorado

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