



Senate's latest voucher bid is a losing bargain for Texas students and teachers

(AUSTIN, TX, May 22, 2023) — The Texas School Coalition testified Monday against the Texas Senate's version of House Bill 100. The new Senate plan seeks to incorporate private-school vouchers into legislation that was otherwise meant to improve the state's school finance system.

The Coalition, which represents school districts that pay recapture to the state, supported HB 100 as it moved from the Texas House because it made some needed changes to school finance formulas and increased the Basic Allotment, which is the main unit of education funding in Texas, by \$140 per student over two years. The Senate version of House Bill 100, which was hastily unveiled and voted out by the Senate Education Committee on Monday morning, makes an even smaller increase to the Basic Allotment — \$50 per student. While the bill makes some other small and welcome investments in education, it also includes Education Savings Accounts, also known as private-school vouchers, that would be available to millions of Texas students.

"The Texas Senate appears unwilling to invest in public schools unless legislators are willing to send hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars per year to private schools as well," said Texas School Coalition Executive Director Christy Rome. "A bill that was meant to put more dollars into public education has been hijacked. The harm caused by private-school vouchers would far outweigh and outlast any benefit that this bill would provide for public school students and teachers."

As passed by the House, House Bill 100 was the only bill moving through the Legislature this year to provide an increase in the Basic Allotment. Still, it fell far short of the estimated \$900 increase in the Basic Allotment needed to help schools overcome 14.5 percent inflation over the past few years.

A bipartisan coalition in the House has prevented voucher legislation from passing so far this year. The School Coalition and many others have repeatedly noted that voucher proposals would provide no meaningful oversight or accountability for how private schools use public dollars.

"With one week left in the legislative session, the Texas Senate is making a desperation play," Rome said. "If they were serious about investing in public education and providing real pay increases for teachers, vouchers would not be part of House Bill 100. The Senate should remove the voucher language from this bill and work in good faith to support public schools."

##

The Texas School Coalition represents recapture-paying school districts. The Coalition advocates for the resources necessary to provide all Texas public school students an excellent education and for a school finance system that balances sustainable state and local investments in the best interests of students and taxpayers.