

End the 'Invest in Kids' Act voucher program

Oppose the Use of Public Dollars for Private Schools

Voucher programs like Illinois' tax credit scholarship program divert resources from our under-funded public schools and don't improve academic outcomes for voucher recipients. ILGA passed the Invest in Kids Act in 2017 with the intent for it to sunset after five years.

Why is this important?

- **Vouchers reduce funding for public schools:** The Invest in Kids program diverts up to \$75M/year in tax revenue funding vouchers. Meanwhile, 80% of Illinois public schools are not adequately funded. Every dollar diverted to private schools via the Invest in Kids Act is one that could be used to increase state funding of the Evidence-Based Funding Formula, which is still short ~\$4B. At the current rate of increasing funding, the state won't reach full funding until 2051.
- **Vouchers allow the use of taxpayer public funds for religious schools:** The vast majority of voucher recipients (~94%) in Illinois are attending religiously-affiliated schools. Using tax credits to pay for religious schools is a violation of one of the fundamental principles the US was founded on—separation of church and state.
- **Vouchers do not improve academic outcomes:** Advocates argue that vouchers provide access to high quality private education for poor children. In fact, decades of studies of voucher programs across the country have not found evidence that voucher students outperform their demographically-matched public school counterparts. More recent long-term studies of programs, including those in DC, IN, LA and OH, have found that students who participate in voucher programs fare substantially *worse* academically (e.g. based on graduation rates and test scores) than students educated in public schools.
- **Vouchers decrease equity:** The ~900,000 low-income students in IL public schools will not be helped by diverting funds to a privatized system that could be used instead to provide funding needed for smaller class sizes, enriched curriculum, better professional development and wraparound services and supports. Vouchers instead concentrate the highest need children in public schools while decreasing resources for those same schools.
- **Vouchers decrease accountability and transparency:** Private schools are not held to the same standards of accountability as public schools. They are not required to disclose how much money they spend on faculty, resources, or materials. Private schools don't have to make their academic standards public or reveal what their curriculum is. To date, there is no public information about the performance of Illinois' voucher students.
- **Vouchers put students at risk of discrimination:** Private schools receiving vouchers in Illinois must follow state and federal anti-discrimination laws, but there is little oversight, and there are no mechanisms for enforcement or compliance. Discrimination on the basis of religion, disability status and sexual orientation in admissions and other school policies is a significant issue in the schools receiving Invest in Kids' vouchers.
- **Vouchers don't have to provide a broad education:** Schools receiving vouchers don't have to comply with the full Illinois School Code, including curriculum requirements designed to educate well-rounded citizens of a multicultural, multiracial democracy.



Ending the Invest in Kids Act is endorsed by the following organizations:

Access Living	ED-RED	Legal Council for Health Justice
ACLU of IL	Equality Illinois	LEND
Action Ridge	Families 4 Students and Teachers	Library Defense
Activate Chicago Parents	50th Ward Working Families	National Association of Social Workers - IL Chapter
AFT Local 604	48th Ward Neighbors for Justice	Network 49
American Association of University Women Illinois	Healing to Action	Network for Public Education
American Association of University Women Naperville Area	Illinois Education Association	Northside Action for Justice
Americans United for the Separation of Church and State	Illinois Families for Public Schools	PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago	Illinois Federation of Teachers	Pilsen Alliance
BG Pride	Illinois High School District Organization	POWER-PAC
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council	Illinois National Organization for Women	Public Funds Public Schools
Center for Tax and Budget Accountability	Illinois Parent Teacher Association	Raise Your Hand for Illinois Public Education
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless	Indivisible Chicago	SCOPE
Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights	Indivisible Evanston	Teach Plus
Chicago Teachers Union	Indivisible Lincoln Square	39th Ward Neighbors United
COFI	JCUA	33rd Ward Working Families
	Journey for Justice Alliance	Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois
	League of Women Voters of Illinois	United Northwest Side
	Learning Disabilities Association of Illinois	

References

- [Analysis of Indiana School Choice Scholarship Program](#) (2015) Center for Tax and Budget Accountability
- [The Highly Negative Impacts of Vouchers](#). (2018) Center for American Progress.
- [23 Illinois Administrative Code 425: Voluntary Registration And Recognition Of Nonpublic Schools](#)
- [Illinois Report Card State Snapshot](#) (2021) IL State Board of Education
- [Invest in Kids Annual Report](#) (2022) IL Department of Revenue
- [Keeping Informed about School Vouchers: A review of major developments and research](#) (2016) Center on Education Policy