

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE BOARD



Defending Public Schools - Reject H.R.1 Voucher Program

H.R.1 passed in June 2025 and included the Educational Choice for Children Act, which established the first ever national school choice tax credit incentivizing donations to scholarship granting organizations (SGOs). The tax credit, which uses federal dollars to support attendance at private institutions, is in reality - a voucher. This new tax credit voucher program will take effect on January 1, 2027, and will provide a dollar-for-dollar tax credit of up to \$1,700 per year. Rather than paying taxes to support public services, individuals and corporations donate those funds to a private entity, the SGO.

Public schools in the United States were established as a cornerstone of American democracy. The founders believed that an informed and engaged citizenry was essential for the survival of self-government. The "common school" movement aimed to provide a universal, free, and non-sectarian education to all children, regardless of their socioeconomic status, as a "great equalizer" to bridge social and economic divides.

Today, inclusive public schools serve as community hubs where students from diverse backgrounds learn and interact, developing important skills in collaboration, decision-making, and tolerance, which benefits the entire society. They offer a wide array of services, including counseling, health services, and before/after-school care, to address the whole student's needs.

Private schools can (and often do) use selective admissions policies to choose which students they enroll based on academic performance, behavioral history, disability status, religion, or gender. Unlike public schools, private institutions receiving public funds through voucher programs are often not subject to the same accountability and oversight standards. They do not have to adhere to the same federal laws, such as many provisions of the IDEA or Title IX civil rights protections, and have broad discretion in their operations.

The core concern is that these credits effectively redirect federal tax dollars that would otherwise support public services. These tax credit voucher programs divert significant funding from public schools and impact student enrollment, leaving fewer resources for student programs and services in public schools.

The Educational Conference Board (ECB) is a coalition of education stakeholders who work together to support our members, schools, students, and public education which

includes advocating for funding and resources to ensure that public school students are prepared to pursue higher education, enter the workforce and civic engagement upon graduation. We believe that every parent has a choice to send their child to the school of their choosing. However, that choice should not come at the expense of public-school students and their education. As such, to ensure that our public schools and students are protected from educational funding inequities, and for public schools to be able respond to the needs of all students, providing wrap-around services and preparing them for future career opportunities, New York must not “opt-in” to the tax credit/voucher program.