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NEW COALITION UNITES TO OPPOSE TAXPAYER-FUNDED PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHER PROGRAM IN NEW YORK

A coalition of more than 60 New York organizations spanning labor unions, civil rights groups, education associations, parent organizations, and civic groups has united in opposition to New York's participation  in President Trump's taxpayer-funded private school voucher scheme.

The federal voucher program — part of the so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill" signed into law by Trump — takes effect Jan. 1, 2027, but only in states where the governor affirmatively opts in. Several Democratic governors have already declined to participate. The coalition is calling on Gov. Kathy Hochul to reject the program in New York.

Thousands of New Yorkers have already [signed a petition](#) asking Hochul to keep public dollars in the public schools that serve 90 percent of New York's kids — with hundreds of new signatures being added every day.

Polling from this week shows that [57 percent of voters oppose New York opting in](#), including 38 percent who strongly oppose it.

In May, 15 members of New York's congressional delegation [sent a letter to Hochul](#) calling on her to protect New York's longstanding dedication to public education.

The coalition's opposition is also [rooted in documented evidence](#) from multiple states that have already launched programs using tax dollars to boost private schools. In Arizona, a universal voucher program projected to cost \$65 million annually ballooned to \$864 million — more than 10 times the estimate — and contributed to a \$1.4 billion state budget shortfall. The vast majority of families using Arizona's program were already sending their children to private schools.

"New York has the benefit of learning from the experience of other states," **said NYSUT President Melinda Person.** "Across the country, voucher programs have diverted billions of dollars from public schools, increased segregation, fueled waste and abuse, and overwhelmingly subsidized families already enrolled in private schools. We don't have to repeat those mistakes. That's why organizations representing millions of New Yorkers are calling on Governor Hochul to opt out of this federal voucher scheme and keep our focus where it belongs: strengthening public education for every child."

"When parents, educators and communities stand together, we win," **said United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew.** "This coalition will fight Trump's plan to defund and weaken public schools."

The federal program, as described so far, would operate with no requirement that participating private schools meet the same accountability standards as public schools and no ability for

states to include their own additional guidelines. Private schools accepting voucher dollars may legally turn away students with disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, and children from families who don't share the school's religious beliefs.

"The federal law does not ensure either participation by children from disadvantaged backgrounds or accountability among schools receiving donations incentivized by the tax credits," **said New York State Council of School Superintendents Executive Director Charles Dedrick**. "Where public schools struggle, it would do nothing to remedy underlying problems and instead would weaken those schools further by depriving them of both revenues and students. Our public schools have been a cornerstone in building one nation, indivisible. New York should not jeopardize the promise of our public schools by opting into this voucher scheme."

"A tax credit that leverages federal resources to support private education runs contrary to the government's primary responsibility, which is to ensure that public schools have the resources to provide every student with access to the programs and services they need to excel," **said New York State School Boards Association Executive Director Robert Schneider**. "In short, public dollars should be used to support public education, which is guaranteed for all students."

"NYS public schools support 2.6 million amazing school children in all of our schools every day, from every walk of life, income, ability, and zip code," **said NYS PTA President Patty Frazier**. "The Educational Choice for Children Act is nothing more than a voucher program that will siphon billions in resources away from these schools and our education funding process — with little to no oversight of the program, and no promise that any of those dollars will even support NYS school children."

"While we fully support a parent's right to choose the educational path for their children, we cannot support diversion of funds away from our schools to newly created private scholarship-granting organizations — which will have no accountability for the use of those funds and no expectation that those funds even reach NYS families in need of support," **said NYS PTA Executive Director Kyle Belokopitsky**. "NYS continues to ensure quality support of all our schools — public, private, independent, and religious through legitimate means in our state budget process. Let's continue that path — supporting all of our children and schools — and keep this harmful proposal out of NYS."

"Opting New York into the Education Freedom Tax Credit program is a mistake," **said NAACP New York State Conference President L. Joy Williams**. "This scheme would drain vital resources from local neighborhood schools to subsidize private tuition for wealthy families who are already paying it, and Black communities will be the ones to suffer. Our schools need stronger investment to address learning gaps, and Gov. Hochul must stand firm for public education and reject this proposal. Public tax dollars must remain where they belong: in public classrooms."

“Taxpayer dollars in New York State must be invested in strengthening our public schools,” **said New York State AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento**. “The federal school voucher program is nothing more than a scheme to divert public resources from the students and schools that serve 90 percent of our children and direct them instead to private institutions. Rather than expanding opportunity, this voucher program undermines public education, creating greater inequity in our schools.”

“Public schools have been the foundation of opportunity in communities across New York,” **said CSEA NY President Mary E. Sullivan**. “Taking resources away from that system hurts students, families and the dedicated workers who support them every day. CSEA stands with our partners in calling for New York to protect and strengthen public education for all.”

A full list of coalition members is available at <https://publicschoolsuniteus.org/our-initiatives/voucher-program/our-coalition>

New Yorkers who wish to add their name to the petition can do so at <https://publicschoolsuniteus.org/our-initiatives/voucher-program/take-action>