



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

TESTIMONY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS Thursday, April 27, 2017

This paper is submitted on behalf of the League of Women Voters in **opposition** to HB 1335. Thank you for allowing us to share this position of the League of Women Voters of Texas.

HB 1335 seeks to establish an Education Savings Account Program for children with disadvantages or disabilities who want to attend private schools. Whether called vouchers, savings accounts, or scholarships, any program using taxpayer money to fund private and religious schools takes away from public education. The League opposes HB 1335 for the following reasons:

1. Proponents of vouchers seek to create a parallel education program rather than repair our current system. No other business would consider such a rash experiment.
2. Once a child with special needs leaves public education, the child loses benefits. No private entity will be able to afford the many services, materials, and equipment currently handled by public schools through IDEA and ADA. Parents forfeit federal protections when leaving public education.
3. Once a child leaves a public school, funding for that child vanishes. Lost funding will cause public school teachers to lose jobs. Many children who leave return to the public system. "More than one-fourth of the students who received special education vouchers of \$6,500 have opted to return to public schools."
4. Funds, taken from public schools should not be used for religious schools. Although not explicitly stated, the constitutional interpretation has been to separate church and state.
5. This bill states, "A private school, may not be required to comply with any state law or rule governing the educational program."

Every dollar removed from public education robs the remaining children of a quality education and therefore, a quality life.

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Work Cited

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The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) is a nonpartisan citizens' organization that has fought since 1919 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. It represents more than 5,000 members and supporters throughout Texas.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. The member-driven organization of women and men encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seeks to influence public policy through education and advocacy of positions based on extensive issue study and consensus.