



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA

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League of Women Voters Responds to Senate Committee's Passage of Voucher Expansion

Tallahassee, Fla -- Today, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed a massive expansion of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (also known as the voucher program), diverting millions of taxpayer dollars to private institutions with little accountability.

"The idea of defunding our public schools and placing more money into private institutions with less accountability, poorer results, and unapproved curriculum deserves a nothing but dunce cap," said League of Women Voters of Florida President Deirdre Macnab. "This is the kind of thing that will earn legislators an 'F' once session has ended."

The [proposed expansion of the voucher program](#) (which has already passed through the Florida House) diverts taxpayer money into a system that:

Provides Poor Results: According to a Florida Department of Education report, students who left the voucher program and returned to their public schools in 2011-12 had lower FCAT scores than they had before they left, and much lower scores than other students in subsidized lunch programs who never left public schools.[1]

Has No Accountability: Private schools do not require teachers to be certified or students to take state tests. There is no valid way to compare public school and private school student achievement except for those who leave private schools and take the FCAT when they return to public schools.

Violates Separation of Church and State: 73% of the money diverted from the state budget via the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program is routed to religious schools by the Step up for Students Foundation - a clear violation of the spirit of the state constitution's prohibition against taxpayer funding of religion.[2]

Is Built on a Myth: At least 43% of Florida Tax Credit scholarship students are leaving public schools that have earned A grades, NOT failing schools as advertised. Only 9.3% leave D or F schools.[3]

"It is unacceptable that the legislature is rapidly expanding an unaccountable parallel private education system, which is in direct conflict with what is mandated by the

Florida Constitution." Macnab concluded.

For further comments please contact LWVF President Deirdre Macnab.

[1] http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/pdf/FTC_Research_2011-12_report.pdf

[2] http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/Information/CTC/files/Fast_Facts_FTC.pdf

[3] http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org/pdf/FTC_Research_2011-12_report.pdf

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The League of Women Voters of Florida, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For more information, please visit the League's website at: www.TheFloridaVoter.org.