



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF FLORIDA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 19, 2016

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## Short-Changing Our Children

**Tallahassee, Fla.** -- "The League of Women Voters of Florida has opposed and will continue to oppose vouchers, in any form, for private schools. Separation of church and state is a fundamental American value. It is a constitutional requirement. Circumventing the law by allowing corporations to shift their tax obligations to private foundations supporting scholarships to private schools is a legal maneuver. Florida lawmakers need to stop trying to find tricks that only shortchange our students, and concentrate on sustainable funding for quality public education," said LWVF President **Pamela Goodman** .

The state now authorizes \$447 million dollars to these Florida Tax Credit scholarships, and the amount rises to over \$559 million next year. Proponents argue that the money goes to poor families. In 2015, the Legislature raised the income eligibility for partial scholarships to over \$62,000 for a family of four, over 250% of the federal poverty level.

The legislative intent states that the law is designed to improve the quality of education. However, charter and private schools are not held to the same accountability and certification standards as public schools. "Basically, FTC scholarships are designed to save money for the state, not to improve educational opportunities for all children. Most of the private schools these children attend are small, religious schools without adequate resources to provide the services children need," Goodman concluded.

Public schools lose funding, and private schools also lack funds. Dividing state resources only ensures that no sector can offer the quality of education that children deserve.

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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](http://www.TheFloridaVoter.org).