



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Finance Committee
Committee name
Committee on HJR 16, dated February 28, 2012
Bill/Subject

I, Joshua Borels, believe that a parent of a child should be allowed to spend the money they would on public school, on an education of their choosing. It is the people who are paying taxes for the education, so it should be up to the people to vote on this matter.

Signed:

Joshua Borels

Testifier

Myself

Representing (Optional)

P.O. Box 873510 Wasilla, AK 99687

Address

(907) 775-7286

Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Finance Committee
Committee name

Committee on HR 16, dated 2/28/12
Bill/Subject

I believe that if a person pays taxes, they should be able to make the choice regarding what school their children go to. I feel that by allowing that money allotted to one child to be available to the parents, that it opens up options for the students that maybe a better fit and that would not be otherwise available. I feel that if a student is not working well within the public school district the parents should be able to put them in a program that would be more appropriate for them, without having to worry about funds that would otherwise be used to help the students. I think it should be opened to the public to vote since it affects them the most.

Signed: Glenn G. Mullins

Testifier

Self

Representing (Optional)

P.O. Box 873512 Wasilla, Ak 99687

Address

(907) 776-1798

Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Finance Com.
Committee name

Committee on HR 16, dated Feb. 28, 2012.
Bill/Subject

What is the fear concerning allowing the voters of this state to decide about school choice. Government money is OUR money. Let us decide. Parents know best as to what is needed for their children.
I encourage you to pass HR 16. Allow the people to decide.

Signed:

Greg Thomas
Testifier

Rep. - Conservative Patriots Group
Representing (Optional)

915 Colonial Park Way
Address

376-5124
Phone number

*Church of the Covenant
An American Baptist Church*



*415 S. Bailey
Palmer, Alaska 99645
907-746-2907*

*Free to Think
Bound to Serve*

*Sarah Welton, Pastor
Home 907-376-8577*

HJR 16 is to change the constitution to allow public moneys to go to private and religious schools. The wording makes it so that the money goes to the students for education but this is just another way to fund religion. Students and families have a right to choose the education of their children but not fund religious or private schools with public money.

- The public schools do a very credible job when one looks at the enormity of the situation, the inconsistencies and happenstances of human differences, the regulations, meeting the needs of all students not just the well behaved, middle class, healthy students– but all students. The recent study that was done by Mat Su Schools following students after graduation attests to the quality of the schools.
- The use of public money for private and religious schools goes against my religious beliefs in the separation of church and state. Freedom from religion is as much a part as freedom of religion in my belief system. The public dollars of the state for education need to go into public education. When they go to private organizations there is no control as to what they will be spent for even if one says and puts into place regulations that say there can be no discrimination or other conditions, there will be. The funds will be used to supplant the usual funds for education that the organizations have. The issues of providing money to religious organizations for education means that they will be promoting their faith with public dollars that normally would be spent on education but is back-filled with public money.
- It will not make education better but worsen the issues that already exist.
- Most of our public education dollars go for the people who deliver education because we believe that highly qualified, dedicated people are

needed to provide the instruction. Taking away dollars essentially increases class sizes, adds stress to the delivery of education, and promotes inequality. The students who are struggling will be left in the public schools as the private schools will figure out ways to dismiss them. The students with special accommodations for any reason will be left out maybe not at first but eventually the drain on resources will be felt enough to marginalize those who need more resources and the public schools will be hurt by the inequality.

- In my opinion this change in the constitution opens the door to publicly funding religion in other ways as well. It also takes away the appropriate use of public education dollars. It will create haves and have nots; it will create separation; it will open the door to funding religion on a grand scale. We have forgotten or maybe we never knew of the struggles of the people who came before us concerning separation of church and state. My particular church history is steeped in it. People left their homelands and settled in the new world to keep religion out of state affairs.


Sarah R. Welton

02/28/12



Alaska State Legislature

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To House Finance Committee,

Please kill bill HJR 16. This bill will in no way improve education ~~and~~ in the state of Alaska.

Our public schools currently take all students. Parents have many choices beyond their neighborhood school. This bill will allow private organizations to collect public monies, while EXCLUDING whomever they feel are unworthy to attend their institutions: children with learning disabilities, limited English, behavioral issues - all of whom are currently welcomed in our public schools. ^{expensive to} educate and

Signed:

Testifier

Representing (Optional)

P.O. Box 1436 Palmer AK 99645

Address

907 745-1261

Phone number



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As a former straight A high school student who dropped out of high school, I challenge the notion that vouchers will solve the drop out rate. During drop out exit interviews, most students drop out due to family issues or a need to get a job. This was the case in my own life. There wasn't anything wrong with my teachers ~~or~~ my school. They were awesome teachers who challenged me and it is because of their caring and academic stimulation that I went back to school later in my life to become a teacher. Vouchers will just undermine our current education system allowing private schools to pick from the cream of the crop. You will actually help to decrease our public schools graduation rates.

Signed:

Tracey H. Martin
Testifier

Representing (Optional)

PO Box 879538, Wasilla, AK 99687
Address

907-~~907~~-357-9389
Phone number

Marilyn Davidson, Asst. Superintendent
Kodiak Island Borough School District
mdavidson01@kibsd.org

907-481-6200

(Housing District
Joint Resolution
(4))

I need to share my concerns in regard to HJR16 and the constitutional amendment that it proposes. This proposal is not a good idea and I urge you to NOT move it forward.

My concerns regarding this measure revolve around the idea of opportunities to serve students, to build our future in the state in the way that families and communities want their children to be served.

Public schools have been built around ideas of equal opportunities for all who come to our doors. Public schools have been held to high standards for all students—those who come from economically disadvantaged homes, those who come with disabilities of all kinds, those who come speaking languages other than English, those who have parents who support their academic work, those who have parents who spend all of their effort struggling to meet the most basic needs so their child can have a chance to succeed in the public school program.

Public schools are also held to ideas of equity—because we serve all, we cannot serve specific populations to the exclusion of others. We do not promote our personal beliefs in the classroom and in fact can lose licensure if we do teach our personal point of view or prefer one ideology or religion over another. Our job is to respect all of those we serve.

Public schools are also held to high requirements regarding federal mandates and requirements, graduation and attendance rates, curricular conformity requirements, provision of special education and English language acquisition programs.

Our private schools currently own the privilege of serving specifically and differently than the public schools do. They have the option of providing specific and targeted sectarian curriculum that focuses on shared beliefs and world views. They have the option of limiting their clientele to those who are in agreement with their beliefs and premises. They have the option to turn students away for whatever criteria they establish.

If there were a constitutional amendment that would allow for the funding of private and religiously based schools, this would be a granting of government money to sectarian organizations. It would seem that this could not be done without placing the same requirements on those schools as are currently placed on the public schools—requirements such as minimum enrollment; common requirements for building codes, health and safety features; common measurements of achievement regarding student progress such as standardized testing, participation rates, granting of accommodations for students with individualized plans; examination of graduation rates, attendance rates, drop out rates, etc.

Such an amendment would indeed siphon funds from our already struggling public schools. If those funds come from the public coffer, then private schools must also be required to do all that the public schools do-- with the same funding—and should

not be exclusive in any way. They should indeed take all who come to their doors as well as the public institutions do. If dollars are allocated, there must be consistent rules for all who receive those dollars.

Please do not impose the limits that are implied by this proposed amendment—limits regarding what the public schools are able to provide and limits regarding what the private schools can and should teach.

HJR 16 is not a good idea and I urge you to not move it forward in this process.

Marty Davidson