

To: Sen. John Coghill

From: Linda C. Hulen, 4740 Newcastle Way, Anchorage 99503

March 14, 2013

I am speaking against SJR9 because public education in Alaska needs MORE support from the state, rather than LESS.

This legislation would amend the Constitution to allow public money to be used for private schools for compulsory education, grades K-12.

This amendment is a bad idea for numerous reasons.

- 1) Public education and all the students enrolled in public schools would suffer, because state money would be drained into private, for-profit educational institutions.
- 2) Nothing in this legislation includes any details about how private schools would be governed by the state in order to get the state money. For instance, would these private institutions be required to take all students, as do the public schools? Would they accept the vouchers or credits from the state to cover the entire cost of the tuition? Would they be required to be accountable for meeting the national and/or state standards, as are the public schools? If the answer is no or not determined for any of these questions, then the use of state money for private schools would be a misuse of funds. The vouchers or credits allowed by the state would be contributing to segregation on economic and educational grounds.
- 3) The legislature has refused for the past 3 years to fund public education adequately. All claims to the contrary fail to consider inflation for student/classroom education. Any increases cited by those arguing that the state has met its funding obligations are looking at money that does not go to meeting the needs of students in the school. All you need to do is look at the cuts districts across the state are making because funding from the state is stagnant.
- 4) In the meantime, the House Finance Committee has proposed a state budget that continues to cut important education funds.
- 5) How can you, as the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, seriously doubt that SJR9 is an education bill? And how can you seriously support further drains on public education in Alaska?

I respectfully ask that you oppose further advancement of this bill through the Alaska Legislature.

Sincerely,



Linda Hulen