

Opposition to HJR1 Amendment to the Constitution of the State of Alaska Relating to State Aid for Private or Religious Schools

I oppose HJR1 for several reasons. First, this resolution seems to have come in part from assertions that public education is failing. However, your actions to date have flat funded public education for a number of years. You expect the same or better educational outcomes with less money, taking into account the ever rising cost of living. This is impossible according to my checkbook.

In addition, private and religious schools have never lived up to the same standard as public education. There are some apparently good schools, but since they do not have to play by the same rules it is hard to compare them. Public schools are required to perform regular testing of students by national standards while private and religious schools are not. Parents may give regular input into public schools and many do, while I'm not sure of such options for other schools.

There are those parents with children in either public, private or religious schools that we are lucky if they get their kids to the school door, much less support the students. Many parents, however, spend many hours in support of their children in school in preparation even before they are old enough to begin Kindergarten.

While I think there should be options, I definitely do not think public funds should be diverted to private or religious schools. Here are two reasons off hand:

- 1 - Public funds should go to public uses.
- 2 - When public money is used, it ultimately means there will be some public control of the funding and curriculum of private or religious schools.

There should be complete separation of church and state. I do not want public officials to have input into any religious organization with which I am affiliated. That is the biggest "no-no" that I can think of, and I'm a very religious person.

My experience is that Alaska's schools have done an excellent job with what they have. I believe if you spent more time with specific schools, teachers and students, you would better understand the needs of those schools and could remedy particular problems.

Personally, my grown children came through the Alaska Public School System and now my granddaughter is coming up through the Fairbanks Public School System. She continues to have great grades, now in the 8th grade, and is thinking of college. They have all excelled! I have two grandsons that are home schooling as their parents' choice and are also doing well.

My children have gone on to have great careers in areas that they have chosen, some in the private sector and some in the public sector. They are all living successful lives and their children are doing well.

There are factors beyond the schools which have much to do with the success of children. Many students which are failing also have other problems. I think that instead of continued decreasing of funding, you should attempt to find out what our local public schools need to improve their success rate.

Sincerely,

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