

Dear Legislator:

I am reaching out as a citizen and a registered voter in the great state of Tennessee to express my objection to the Freedom Scholarship Act. As an elected official, our community trusts in you to honor the voices and wishes of your constituents – and we are speaking loudly on this topic. There are many reasons you should vote against this proposed legislation, including but not limited to:

- Unequal accountability requirements for private schools accepting public dollars
- Existing disinterest in similar programs already implemented in Tennessee
- Limited transparency in operations and processes for private schools
- Exclusive, subjective, and unregulated enrollment processes for private schools
- Potential long-term loss of public-school funding
- Numerous peer state examples of similar programs that are expensive and ineffective

Citizens have followed this legislation and know our Tennessee lawmakers are well aware of our concerns. We recognize the need for intervention in underperforming schools across the state, but we firmly reject using a small number of publicly funded awards as a means for claiming victory over the complex challenge of educating our most vulnerable.

For context, this act provides for 20,000 awards across the state. By contrast, we educate one million K-12 students in Tennessee. We will never successfully privatize our way into educational excellence. On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Tennessee students who will never be accepted into or able to afford a private education, the only answer is to support and strengthen our public schools.

I respectfully implore you to vote against the Freedom Scholarship Act, and to advocate strongly for furthering the strength of public education in Tennessee. Even with significant resource allocation over the last few years, Tennessee still ranks in the bottom half of the country in most education-related metrics. Public schools do not “choose their own team,” but thousands of dedicated educators wake up every school day and take up the challenge of educating everyone who walks through their doors – no matter the student’s personal challenges or family background.

Please honor our requests and our voices and put this topic to rest once and for all by voting in opposition of the Freedom Scholarship Act along with any related legislation that supports using public funds to support non-public schools in Tennessee.

In support of public education,