
Press Release: League of Women Voters Questions Use of Education Vouchers

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League of Women Voters: Some NC Schools Leave Students Unprepared for College, Careers

The League of Women Voters released a white paper today that calls into question how some of North Carolina's Opportunity Scholarships are being spent. The author's research indicates that approximately 77% of private schools receiving vouchers are using curricula that do not comply with state standards, leaving many students unprepared for college level coursework or careers in certain fields. The League is asking state officials to review how voucher money is being spent and enforce standards to ensure students receive quality education.

"These schools are receiving public money, and all we ask is that the state hold them accountable to ensure that their students are receiving the constitutionally guaranteed education to which they are entitled," said League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear (LWV-LCF) board member and report author Bonnie Bechard.

The North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship Program was established in 2013 to provide government-funded vouchers for students to attend private schools. By the academic year 2028-29, the state will have spent over \$1 billion on vouchers. Recent reports, public concern, and legislative activity lead LWV-LCF to begin a study of the Opportunity Scholarship Program in January 2017.

The League of Women Voters study found that a high percentage of schools receiving vouchers use curricula that adhere to a biblical worldview across a wide array of subjects. Experts who have reviewed these curricula have raised many concerns, including that some universities may not accept coursework in classes where it is taught.

Jane Wettach, director of the Children's Law Clinic at the Duke University School of Law, is one of the experts voicing concern. "This is a very important contribution to the conversation about vouchers," Wettach said of the League report.

Dr. William Snider is a professor in the Department of Neurology at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine and Founding Director of the university's Neuroscience Center where he served as director from 1999 to 2016. Dr. Snider wrote a critique of one of the curricula in question (the Abeka brand Biology textbook) in 2014 and was surprised to learn that curricula like Abeka were being widely taught with public money.

"I had no idea that 77% of these vouchers were going to schools teaching literal bible-based content in

place of a properly vetted educational curriculum,” said Dr. Snider. “I hope this report has broad readership and gets to the attention of our legislators.”

League of Women Voters leaders say their goal is to promote proper oversight and standards for the use of public funds.

“This is about transparency and accountability,” said League of Women Voters of North Carolina Co-President Janet Hoy. “The state of North Carolina has a responsibility to its citizens to ensure tax dollars are being spent wisely. Students receiving education with public funds must be well-prepared for life and work in the 21st century.”

The white paper is entitled *NC Private Schools Receiving Vouchers: A Study of the Curriculum* and can be read in full [here](#).

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About the League of Women Voters: *The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that 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 additional information, please visit www.lwv.org or www.lwvnc.org.*

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