



*** NEWS RELEASE ***

Rally cry from public school supporters: Let Us Vote!

Hundreds gather at State Capitol today to challenge a bill taking away Nebraskans' right to vote on giving public tax dollars to private schools

April 20, 2024, Lincoln – Nearly 500 public school supporters marched to the State Capitol Saturday to protest the passage of a bill that takes away Nebraskans' right to vote on giving public tax dollars to private schools.

"Inscribed on the north face of the State Capitol building are the words 'The Salvation of the State is Watchfulness in the Citizen.' We've been watching and we do not like what we've seen," said Jenni Benson, Support Our Schools Nebraska. **"We will fight back against the cowardly and cynical attempt to deny Nebraskans their right to vote."**

Last year, the legislature passed LB753, a bill to divert tax dollars to pay for private schools through a tax credit scheme. Opponents of LB753 led a successful referendum petition to put repeal of the law on this November's ballot.

"Last summer, more than 117,000 Nebraskans signed the petition to let voters decide whether the state should use public funds to pay for private schools," said Benson. "Voters in every one of Nebraska's 93 counties signed that petition."

The issue is certified to appear on this November's ballot, but on Thursday senators passed Sen. Lou Ann Linehan's LB1402 – which takes away Nebraskans' right to vote on LB753 and replaces it with LB1402 which would impose a costly new private school voucher scheme on Nebraska taxpayers.

"LB1402 must be challenged," said Benson. **"We are preparing for all options – from launching another petition effort to challenging the constitutionality of this bill."**

"There is substantial evidence from other states showing the harm these costly voucher programs cause public schools and taxpayers. Vouchers undermine strong public education and student opportunity. They take scarce funding from public schools—which serve 90 percent of students—and give it to private schools—institutions that are not accountable to taxpayers," said Benson.

"Instead of sending public dollars to private schools, which are under no obligation to serve all children, state funds should be used to support the public schools that 9 out of 10 Nebraska students attend.

"As taxpayers and public school advocates, we are committed to continuing the fight to ensure voters' wishes on this issue are heard and respected," Benson said.

For more information, visit: <https://supportourschoolsnebraska.org/>

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