



Jenni Benson, President

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Advance of Voucher Bill is a Slap in the Face to Voters

*Public School Supporters Promise Continued Fight
Against Using Public Funds for Private Schools*

April 9, 2024, Lincoln, NE – Public school supporters say they will continue to fight for Nebraskans' right to vote on whether they support diverting public funds to pay for private schools.

By a whisker-thin margin, the legislature tonight sent LB1402 – Sen. Lou Ann Linehan's latest push to impose a costly voucher scheme on Nebraska taxpayers – to the second round of consideration.

"Tonight's vote is a slap in the face to the 117,415 Nebraskans who signed the successful referendum petition to have voters decide the issue on the November ballot," said Jenni Benson, a Support Our Schools Nebraska member and the president of the NSEA. **"We will continue the fight to ensure voters' wishes on this issue are heard and respected. That can include another petition effort and a legal challenge to the constitutionality of this bill."**

LB1402 would provide a direct appropriation of public dollars to fund private schools. The initial cost to Nebraska taxpayers is \$10 million; however, in other states with similar voucher schemes, the costs to taxpayers have grown exponentially and public schools have suffered severe funding and program cuts as a result.

Opponents of the law say the policy will harm students, families, and public schools by diverting would-be public education funding to private and religious schools that can discriminate against kids and that are not held accountable to taxpayers.

Last summer, it took fewer than 90 days for 117,415 Nebraskans to sign a referendum petition seeking the repeal of LB753, the tax voucher scheme Sen. Linehan pushed through last year's legislative session. Voters in every one of Nebraska's 93 counties signed petitions, and the effort collected at least 5% of the registered voters in 64 of those counties.

"I urge our state lawmakers to respect Nebraskans' wishes," said Benson. "To do that, legislators must vote no on advancing LB1402 and no on cloture."

"It is deeply troubling that Sen. Lou Ann Linehan and her out-of-state billionaires continue to try to deny Nebraskans' right to vote on this issue," said Benson. "They spent \$1.45 million in their attempt to stop Nebraskans from signing the LB753 petition and, even after the petition was successful and certified for the ballot by the Secretary of State, Sen. Linehan tried to have the Secretary of State reverse the certification and remove the issue from the November ballot. Now, Linehan and her billionaire buddies are pushing the legislature to impose a new voucher scheme in the form of LB1402 onto Nebraska taxpayers while denying them the opportunity to vote on the issue."

LB1402 would replace the LB753 voucher scheme with an even more draconian voucher scam that directly appropriates public funds to private schools. **Passage of LB1402's voucher scheme also denies Nebraskans the right to vote in November on whether they support giving public funds to private schools.**

"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," said Benson.

Voters are encouraged to contact their state senator to VOTE NO on LB1402 – both the bill and any cloture motion:
<https://www.nsea.org/action>

*The Nebraska State Education Association is a member-directed
professional employee organization representing 25,000 public school teachers
and other educational professionals across Nebraska.*

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