



## South Carolina State Conference

February 6, 2023

### **For Immediate Release**

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### **RE: Senate Bill 39**

It has become clear to the NAACP South Carolina State Conference that Senate Bill 39 is on the fast track to become law. Should S39 pass, it will authorize the state to use public funds at private schools for all levels of education, from kindergarten to grade 12. Not only will this remove much needed funds from our traditional public schools, but it will also severely diminish the right of every child in South Carolina to a free public education.

Specifically, S39 will allow private schools, many of which were created to maintain South Carolina's system of segregated education, to accept public money without affording children the same right they have to attend public schools. The private schools already have governing boards which means that the parents of students who are "income eligible" will have no voice in their children's education. Moreover, their children will have to find additional money to pay to attend the private schools. In short, S39 is an effort to help a certain group of students afford tuition at private schools, while pretending to improve educational opportunities for poor kids.

There are many problems with our school system, but they can be addressed if our leaders are willing to work with all citizens in good faith. We should end the notion that schools cannot succeed and work together for the good of all.

If the General Assembly wishes to move forward with ratifying this bill, then there are certain stipulations that we believe should be considered. First, there should be open admission, which will allow for a non-competitive and unselective application process. This type of process will grant each student in the State of South Carolina an equal opportunity to be accepted. Secondly, after individual assessments have been conducted, students who may not rise to the applicable standard in the eligible school, should have access to remedial measures to meet the required standards. Thirdly, students whose emotional maturity may not measure up or conform to the applicable standard should be given ample opportunity for Due Process prior to the student's expulsion from the school. Lastly, the community shall be informed regarding the expenditure of state funds and their usage. The Freedom of Information Act should apply to these expenditures.

We pray that you will do your best to protect students in the State of South Carolina and ensure that every student has the right to high quality, free public education.