



Public Comments for House K-12 Education Committee

By Reverend Suzanne Parker Miller, Pastors for NC Children

May 4, 2024

Good afternoon. I am The Rev. Suzanne Parker Miller, and I am the Executive Director of Pastors For North Carolina Children. I am here today to stand in opposition of House Bill 823 to further expand vouchers for unregulated, unaccountable, and discriminatory private schools and ask that instead you fully fund public education.

The voucher program dates back to the end of segregation with Brown v. Board of Ed. Segregationists, led by some white churches, wanted to continue to segregate their white children from THOSE children across town or across the tracks. They did not want THEIR White CHILDREN meeting neighbors who had more melanin in their skin. Thus segregation academies opened to perpetuate segregation at taxpayers expense. It was WRONG of churches then to encourage segregation, and it's wrong today as well.

We have the Constitutional obligation – and Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity TODAY to FULLY FUND the Leandro Plan as a way to ensure that every single one of our children have what they each need to flourish. It's the ONLY right and moral thing to do. It's also the legal thing to do as you all swore an oath to uphold the NC Constitution, so I ask you to fully fund the Leandro Plan before ever considering further expanding vouchers.

The beauty and grace of public schools is that they MUST serve EVERY SINGLE CHILD who walks in their doors—regardless of disabilities or zip code or their family's income. Public schools build up our communities. Public schools ensure EVERY SINGLE CHILD receives what they need to FLOURISH. When we fund exclusionary private schools at the EXPENSE of public schools, we are not living into God's definition of neighbor because we are putting SOME children above others. **If a public school is not good enough for YOUR child or grandchild to attend, then it's past time we FULLY FUND that public school to make it the best it can be.** Thank you.



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