

Legislation Text

File #: 240598, **Version:** 0

Condemning the use of school voucher programming as harmful to the School District of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is considering its Fiscal Year 2025 budget. In previous budget cycles, political forces have sought to pass significant increases to school voucher funding, including a Fiscal Year 2024 push to increase voucher funding by \$100 million. The legislature deadlocked over the introduction, and it took significant effort to eventually pass a voucher-free budget; and

WHEREAS, The School District of Philadelphia faces a fiscal cliff beginning in early 2025. More than \$400 million in services and programming are jeopardized by the ending of COVID relief funding, and the School District of Philadelphia is the only district in the Commonwealth that does not have control over its own revenue; and

WHEREAS, Evidence shows school vouchers are frequently provided to families who already choose to attend non-public schools and often go to families earning more than \$200,000 a year. Budgets are zero-sum documents; funding vouchers means there is less money to go to public schools that are already in desperate need of support and financial assistance; and

WHEREAS, Despite the coming fiscal cliff imperiling critical School District of Philadelphia programs and services, recent activity in Harrisburg indicates the legislature has revived the fight over school vouchers, with the Pennsylvania Senate Education Committee passing a bill that would fund vouchers; and

WHEREAS, Statewide shortages of teachers, over-crowded classrooms, and deteriorating facilities can only be addressed through holistic, deep and long-term investments of billions of dollars into public school infrastructure. Putting any money into vouchers for private schools with little financial oversight means less money for students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Condemns the use of school voucher programming as harmful to the School District of Philadelphia.