

May 12, 2025

The Hon. Jason Smith
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
1139 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Richard Neal
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
1129 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Neal:

We are 60 faith community organizations, denominations, and congregations, representing more than 3.3 million people, and 260 faith leaders from across the United States. We write to express our strong opposition to private school vouchers, and in particular the inclusion of the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA) in budget reconciliation.

ECCA would create a national voucher program that would divert more than \$20 billion of federal tax dollars to private schools and families who homeschool. We oppose this legislation because vouchers violate the foundational principle of religious freedom. This proposal will benefit the wealthy while harming our public schools, our students, and our communities, and it will undermine our houses of worship.

There are so many reasons to oppose private school vouchers. They harm public schools, which educate 90% of American schoolchildren and are vital to our country and our democracy. Moreover, they primarily go to wealthy families; don't improve student achievement; lack accountability, leading to frequent waste and fraud; fund discrimination; underserve students with disabilities; and can exacerbate racial segregation. They harm rural communities and don't offer a real alternative for most families.

Vouchers violate religious freedom, which is a cornerstone of our democracy. Religious freedom protects every American by ensuring that the government cannot force any of us to pay for someone else's religious education. Yet taxpayer-funded vouchers primarily go to religious schools. Vouchers also threaten the autonomy of religious schools by opening them up to government audits, control, and interference. The responsibility for religious education belongs to families, houses of worship, and other religious institutions — we do not need or want the government to be involved.

ECCA would fund vouchers through a harmful \$20-billion tax credit scheme. It would allow individuals to receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit in exchange for giving money to an intermediary organization, which then would funnel that money to private school tuition and homeschooling costs. Even worse, wealthy people could actually make money by offloading stocks to avoid capital gains tax while also receiving a tax credit for both the value of the stock and their realized gains. This would essentially create a direct transfer of taxpayer funds away from the public trust and into private schools. The only people who win in this scenario are wealthy, sophisticated investors who would make money while our students lose.

This tax credit scheme will inevitably harm charities doing good work in our communities, including our houses of worship. Because ECCA financially incentivizes giving money to private school vouchers over donations to charities, people would be less likely to give to their congregations, veterans organizations, homeless shelters, and food banks. Our faith communities, which do meaningful, important work to help both their congregants and their neighbors, will suffer.

Because of our rich tapestry of beliefs, we cannot sit idly by and allow a policy that would line the pockets of the wealthy at the expense of our children and our faith communities. We therefore come together to urge you to reject any effort to include private school vouchers in the reconciliation process.

Thank you.

List in Formation

Alliance of Baptists
American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin
American Conference of Cantors
Anthony's Plot Community, Winston-Salem, NC
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
Blue Ocean Faith Columbus, OH
Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Boise, ID
Boone Memorial Presbyterian Church, Caldwell, ID
Carolina Jews for Justice
Christ United Church, Olmsted Falls, OH
Church of One Love, Farmers Branch, TX
Commonwealth Baptist Church, Alexandria, VA
Congregation Beth Israel, Portland, OR
Congregations 4 Children - North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Episcopal Diocese of Missouri
Fairfield Friends Meeting, Camby, IN
Faith Commons
Faithful America
Fellowship Southwest
First Baptist Church, Lumberton, NC
First Christian Church, Fort Worth, TX
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Boise, ID
Friends Congregational United Church of Christ, College Station, TX
Friends General Conference
Galileo Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Fort Worth, TX
Good Faith Media
Immanuel Baptist Church, Frankfort, KY

Interfaith Alliance
Interfaith Alliance of Iowa
Interfaith Alliance of Southwest Florida
Interfaith Worker Justice - New Mexico
Kyrie Pub Church, Fort Worth, TX
Makom Shelanu Congregation, Fort Worth, TX
Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ, Oklahoma City, OK
Men of Reform Judaism
Metropolitan Community Church of the Quad Cities, Davenport, IA
National Council of Jewish Women
One River Foundation
Pastors for Children
Pastors For Florida Children
Pastors for Indiana Children
Pastors for Kentucky Children
Pastors for NC Children
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Riverside Church at Park and King, Jacksonville, FL
Riverside Church Tampa Bay, St. Petersburg, FL
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Monrovia, CA
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Goldsboro, NC
St. Luke Lutheran Church, Ocean Isle Beach, NC
St. Peter's Evangelical United Church of Christ, Kewanee, IL
Together for Hope
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Community of El Paso
United Church of Christ
United Women in Faith
University Baptist Church , Austin, TX
University Christian Church, Hyattsville, MD
WestWind Church, Keller, TX
Women of Reform Judaism

Rev. Candace Adams, MO
Rev. Alyssa Aldape, VA
Rev. Dr. Sarah Allen, TX
Cantor Sheri Allen, TX
Rev. Marty Anderson, VA
Rev. Robin Anderson, VA
Rabbi Charles Arian, MD
Rabbi Melanie Aron, DC
Rev. Todd Atkins, MA
Rev. Jeremiah Banks, KY

Rev. Aiden Barnes, VA
Rabbi Robert Barr, OH
Chaplain Roy Bates, NY
Dr. Ramon Batts, IN
Rev. Dr. Layne Beamer, TX
Rev. Rebecca Bean, NC
Rev. Andrew Bear, CA
Rev. Dr. Holly Beaumont, NM
Rev. Dr. Jay Beavers, TX
Rabbi Shelley Kovar Becker, NY

Rev. Dr. Beverlee Bell, IA
Rev. Glen Bengson, OH
Rev. Brad Bennett, NC
Rev. Dr. Rick Bennett, TN
Rev. Bethany Benz-Whittington, TN
Rev. Dr. Larry Bethune, TX
Rev. Elizabeth Bier, WI
Leslie Bloyer, NY
Carol Blythe, MD
Rev. Kayla Bonewell, OK
Pastor David Borger Germann, IA
Rev. Jake Bradley, IL
Rev. Dr. Mark Bradley, IL
Elizabeth Branch, AR
Rev. Collette Broady Grund, WI
Rev. Dr. Candice Brown, IA
Rev. Ben Brucker, CA
Rev. Molly Brummett Wudel, NC
Rev. Jessica Cain, TX
Rev. Dr. Dennis Carpenter, WI
Rev. Kyle Carswell, IA
Caleb Carter, NC
Mary Carver, TX
Rev. Canon Peg Chamberlin, MN
Dr. Danny Chisholm, TN
Jay Clem, CA
Robert Coleman, TX
Rev. Barbara Condon, ID
Rev. Margaret Conley, GA
John Corpus, TX
Rev. David Cozart, TX
Rev. Rebecca Craver, NC
Rev. Chris Crowley, VA
Rev. Sarah Crowther-Dixon, TX
Dr. David Currie, TX
Amy Dalhausser, TX
Rev. Dr. Teresa Danielely, MO
Rev. Jennifer Davis, TX
Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon, TX
Rev. Jeanne Devine, TX
Connie Deweese, TX
Rev. Ellen Di Giosia, TX
Rev. Iona Dickinson, CA
Rev. Miriam Diephouse-McMillan, NJ

Rev. Mary Downey, FL
Rev. Ryan Downing, IA
Russell Doyle, OH
Rev. Allison Drake, TX
Mrs. Melodie Elliott, TX
Rev. Hana Elliott, IN
Rev. Charles Esper, SC
Rev. Dr. Leonard Ezell, LA
Dr. Emily Falis, TX
Dr. Melissa Fallen, VA
Fr. Joseph Farnes, ID
Rev. Sharon Felton, KY
Dr. Keith Felton, KY
Pastor David Ferguson, CO
Rev. Ronald Field, VA
Rev. Patsy Fine, CA
Rabbi Daniel Fink, ID
Rev. Sheila Fiorella, TX
Rev. Sara Fisher, MD
Rabbi Joshua Fixler, TX
Rev. Dr. Shannon Fleck, OK
Claire Flores, TX
Janet Follstaedt, TX
Rev. Katrina Forman, NJ
Dana Friedel, TX
Rev. Eric Fulcher, LA
Rev. Dr. Kevin Gardner-Sinclair, KY
Rev. K. Garland, AZ
Pastor Buddy Gharring, ID
Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert, NY
Rev. Dr. John Gilmore, PA
Rev. Dr. Daniel Glaze, VA
Rev. James T. Golden, FL
Rev. Adam Gray, FL
Rev. Kerry Greenhill, VA
Rev. Jim Grunow, ID
Mary Guarino, NC
Rev. Dr. Sarah Halverson-Cano, CA
Rev. Samuel Hamilton-Poore, AL
LeAnn Hampton, TX
Rev. Nikki Hardeman, GA
Rev. David Hargrave, TX
Rev. Dr. Sharon Harris-Ewing, FL
Rev. Kathleen Hatlevig, CA

Rev. Jennifer Hawks, VA
Deaconess Renée Hayes, NC
Rev. Dr. Katie Hays, TX
Rev. Rich Hendricks, IA
Rev. Karen Hernandez, ID
Rev. Jerrie Hildebrand, MA
Rev. Madison Hilt, FL
Rabbi Liz Hirsch, OH
Rev. Dr. Emily Holladay, KY
Jean Holland, ID
Rev. Michael Holman, MI
Rev. Julie Hoplamazian, NY
Rev. Thomas Horrocks, IN
Rabbi Daniel Horwitz, TX
Rev. Dr. Larry Hovis, NC
Rev. Dennis Howerton, AZ
Rev. Joshua Huber, MO
Rev. Dr. Ben Huelskamp, OH
Rev. John Jackman, NC
Rev. Karen Jackson, NC
Rev. Roger Jasper, KY
Rev. William Jenkins, FL
Rev. Sandhya Jha, CA
Rev. Matthew Johnson, TX
Rev. Carl Johnson, NC
Rev. Allan B. Jones, CA
Charles W. Jones, TX
Rev. Courtney Jones, FL
Rabbi Lewis Kamrass, OH
Rev. Mary Kaylor, NC
Rev. Sarah Klaassen, MO
Rev. Kristin Klade, TX
Rev. David F. Kniker, IL
Rev. Sue Koenig, PA
Elder Laddene Korhonen, ID
Rev. Paul Larson, IL
Rev. Sara LaWall, ID
Rev. Reed Lawson, NC
Gayle Lawson, TX
Rev. Stacy Lawton, SC
Rev. Josh Lee, ID
Dr. Susan Lee Sharp, NC
Rev. Rebecca Littlejohn, CA
Rev. Alex Lockridge, KY

Rev. Ramiro Lopez, TX
Rev. Robert Loshuertos, AL
Abby Lublin, NC
KayLynn Lyon, TX
Debbie Mallis, ID
Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, WI
Rev. Marnie Fisher-Ingram, VA
Rev. Dane Martin, NC
Rev. Phill Martin, TX
Rev. Dr. George Mason, TX
Rev. Barbara Jo Matson, IA
Dr. Arch Mayfield, TX
Joel McCoy, TX
Rev. Brittany McDonald Null, MO
Rev. Lauren McDuffie, KY
Georgia McKee, TX
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Rev. Alex McNeill, NC
Rev. Katie McQuage-Loukas, TX
Rev. Susan Meadors, MS
Rabbi Ralph Mecklenburger, TX
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Pastor Janis Montgomery, OH
Rev. Dr. Rory Naeve, TN
Rev. Dr. Warren Napier, CO
Karen Nelson, OR
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Rev. Mark Newton, TX
Rev. Ashley Nicolls, FL
Rev. Dr. Alvaro Nieves, IN
Rev. Dr. William Nirote, OH
Rev. Katya Ouchakof, WI
Rev. Joshua Owens, NC
Rev. Suzanne Parker Miller, NC
Rev. Jon Parks, LA
Rev. Dr. Emily Peck, MD
Rev. Eric Peltz, VA
Rabbi Barbara Penzner, MA
Rev. Timothy Peoples, TX
Jeff Perkins, TX
Pastor Byron Pitts, TX
Rev. Tom Plumbley, TX

Rev. Robyn (Casey) Pope, CO
Rev. Kevin Pranoto, AR
William Bruce Prescott, OK
Dr. Lowell Pullen, VA
Dr. Mitch Randall, OK
Mr. Peter Rawitsch, NC
Stephen Reeves, TX
Rev. Julia Rendon, IA
Rev. Kathleen Rose, ID
Rev. Dr. Clyde Ruffin, MO
Connie Ryan, IA
Rev. Rodney Noel Saunders, CO
Rev. Christopher Schelin, CA
Rev. Katey Schwind Williams, ID
Rev. Judith Seizys, IL
Rabbi Rami Shapiro, TN
Pastor Steve Sheely, AR
Rev. Anna Shouse, KS
Rev. Justin Sizemore, KY
Rev. Britt Skarda, AR
Rev. Sarah Slack, TN
Kim Smith, NC
Rabbi Jeanne Snodgrass, MO
Rev. Fran Spier Saylor, NC
Pastor Patricia Stalter, IA
Rev. Courtney Stamey, MS
Rev. Travis Stanley, IA
Rev. Laura Stephens-Reed, AL
Rev. Brittany Stillwell, AR
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Rev. Cathy Stone, TX
Joanie Strohm, NC
Elder Maria Studer, NY

Fr. Neil Tadken, CA
Rev. Casey Tanguay, TX
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Rev. Dr. Nathan Taylor, VA
Rev. Glen Thamert, NM
Rev. Dr. Neil Thomas, TX
Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Thompson, IA
Rev. Michael Townsend, TX
Rev. Eliza Tweedy, NH
Howard Van Slyke, ID
Rev. Dawn Victor, IL
Jo Wainright, NC
Rev. Dr. Lori Walke, OK
Christina Walker, TX
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Rev. Bruce Weaknecht, PA
Rev. Natalie Webb, TX
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Rev. Anika Whitfield, AR
Ms. Sandra Wilcox Conway, NC
Rev. Rick Willis, TX
Keith Wimmersberger, IN
Rev. Mark Wise, VA
Rev. Dr. Janet Wolfe, WI
Rev. Laura Woods, OK
Deaconess Diana Woods, TX
Pastor Ramon Wycoff, NC
Rev. Dr. Richard Wynne, NC
Charles Yarbrough, TX
Rabbi Lina Zerbarini, NY
Rev. Dr. Paul Ziese, TX

List in Formation