

16 March 2026

Dear Mayor Bowser and Members of the DC Council,

We value public education. If you share that value, you cannot opt into Section 70411 of the OBBA which creates a K-12 federal tax credit voucher program and allows states to opt in. Beginning in 2027, individuals can get a dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit – up to \$1,700 per year per person (\$3400 for married couples) – for donations made to designated scholarship granting organizations (SGOs). The SGO must distribute 90% of its income to provide vouchers to students attending K–12 schools to support educational costs. The vast majority of the funding is expected to be directed to private school tuition subsidies.

We have no reason to believe that further guidance will allow the mayor to control how these funds are spent. The goal is to privatize education. These are vouchers that divert funds away from public schools. There is no cap on how much in vouchers is available. Families making up to \$329,000 would be eligible. While it is allowed it is not required for any funds to be distributed to support students in public schools. Tax credits mean less money available to be spent to support public education, health, SNAP etc. Additionally, voucher expansions necessarily disenfranchise students with disabilities, who may not realize that they waive their IDEA rights if entering into private systems. Students who identify as Multilingual Learners also have no guaranteed services in private systems, and students who experience disciplinary pushout, particularly students of color, have few discrimination protections. The history of school voucher programs show clear exclusionary and racist intent, which has not been mitigated by the OBBA policy. This lack of support has a clear and immediate effect for students who might “benefit” from SGOs.

DC will not control the SGO’s who disburse the funds. The necessary accountability and anti-discrimination measures to protect our students and communities are weak. The federal nondiscrimination protections and civil rights laws are now limited and shrinking. As noted the current voucher program has been costly but not effective.

This tax credit was passed to support students already attending private schools and to incentivize others to join them outside the public system. The threat of a reduced birth rate in the city and school closings is already with us. We don’t know how many families might apply or what the effect will be but we do understand the goal is to destabilize and undermine public schools.

While it is theoretically *possible* for public school-focused SGOs to raise money for supplemental services, the funds raised by those who support public school giving currently give to their school PTA’s and local fundraisers. There is little chance that funds will go to those that need them the most, advance equity or support our fragile democracy here in DC.

It is short sighted and dangerous to opt in to this program. This administration can continue to eliminate funds for educational programming, community schools and move on to gutting IDEA and Title 1 while they claim they are spending billions on education through the tax credit program.

We the undersigned ask that you **do not OPT in** and that you stand for Public Education and public programs that will benefit all of the residents of the District of Columbia, not a chosen few.

Organizations

Defend DC Public Education Coalition

Washington Teachers Union

EmpowerEd

Teaching for Change

Coalition for DC Public Schools and
Communities

Grassroots DC

Decoding Dyslexia DC

Jefferson Academy Family Alliance

Ward 6 Public School Parent Organization

Individuals & Individuals in Official Roles

Adom M. Cooper

Agatha Koproiwaki

Alanna Houck

Alex Wyld

Alexia Tsoukatos

Alina Baci

Alison Dowling

Allison Hawkins

Amanda Gerken

Amelia Hogan

Andrew Smith

Angelique Diggs

Anna Kuhn

Antonio Jackson

Aristidis Payne-Tsoupros

Ashley Holcomb

Athena Viscusi

Ava Millstone

Ayashia Muhammad

Begona Rebeca Rodriguez

Alonso

Beth Leone

Betsy Wolf

Betsy Wolf

Betty Miller

Brendan Freehart

Brian Slocum

Brianna Warren

Caprice Casson

Cara Schiavone

Carlton Ackerman

Cathy Reilly

Cathy Reilly

Cedrece Watson

Celia Daughtridge

Chloe Asselin

Claire Zahava Stehley

Colin Welch

Damir Cosic

Daniel Williams

Darlene Serrano

DaVaughn Montgomery

David Martinez Avila

David Neigus

Deborah Menkart

Diana Chavez

Delvecchio Faison

Dorie Turner Nolt

Dr. Denise Ray

Dylan Craig

E. Inez Steigerwald

Ebony Marshman

Edivia Henderson

Elisa Gunduz

Elizabeth Kingsley

Elizabeth Mitchell

Elizabeth Weiss

Elyse Lerum

Emily Gasoi

Emily Roderer	Jennifer Schiller	LaQuanna Jones
Emily Young	Jennifer Wharton	Laura Fichst
Emma Bechill	Jessica Champagne	Laura Petty
Erika Smith	Jessie Caola	Laura Worby
Ethan Wise	Joanna Peltason	Leigh Dingerson
Eva Heintzelman	John Agan	Lewis Erickson
Fid Thompson	Jonathan Inman	Liane Scott
Fred J Solowey	Juan Butler	Lindsay Tauscher
Gabriel Webster	Julia Hedlund, ANC 5F07	Lisa Addison
Gabrielle McRae	Julia Linfors	Lola Dardzinski
Geoffrey Hatchard	Julie Meyer	Lorena Flores
Georgena Williams	Kailah Prater	Louienyl Castor
Gloria Schoolfield	Karen Eschbach	Lupi Grady, President and CEO, Latin American Youth Center
Hanlon Smith-Dorsey	Karen Pence	Lynda Tredway
Hannah Bauman	Karla Reid-Witt	Magaly Flores Perez
Hannah Putman	Katherine Beckman-Gotrich	Manissa Maharawal
Hattie Shaw	Kathleen Barber	Marcella Daniel
Holly Poole-Kavana	Katie Quattrone	Marchelle Putney
Hope LeGro	Kennieth Smith	Marcy Hairston
India Locklear	Khaleelah Cohen	Maria Helena Carey
Jacqueline C Johnson	Kimberly Ellis	Marie Dennis
Jaime Arora	Kimberly Harrington	Marissa P Yeakey
Jaime Willis	Kirsten Wittkowski	Mark Simon
Jean Blackerby Strich	Krayna Feinberg	Marlena Mitchell
Jeannemarie Otersen	Kristen Arant	Matthew church
Jenelle Whittaker	Kristin Sinclair	Megan Caine
Jennifer Hunter	Kya Mathews	

Megan Dunn	Rebecca Askin	Sean Mitchell
Megan Luczak	Rebecca Bauer	Shaaren Pine
Megan Mamula	Rebecca Helgerson	Shelby Hackney
Melanie Roussell Newman	Rebecca Pred-Sosa	Shirley Thompson
Melissa Alto	Renana Fox	Somone Manson
Michael Lake	Rev. Roderick K. Moore	Sophia Baratta
Michaela Beroza Friedman	Rick Reinhard	Stacy Roberts
Michelle Burrows Doerr	Robert Henderson, Ward 5 Representative, SBOE	Suzanne Wells
Molly Timmins	Robin Appleberry	Tasha Salley-Leroy
Morgan M Ward	Roni DiGenno	Taylor Moore
Nancy Sarah Smith	Ruth Wattenberg	Tene Penny
Nicolas Sardella	Ryan Shepard	Teneisha Holder
Nina Miraflores	Ryan Townsley	Thaeya Adams
Nina Smith	Samantha Kaplan	Thea Lee
Olivia DiBiase	Samantha Trumbull	Thomas Guglielmo
Patricia Oliver	Sandra M. Granobles	Tiffany Bell
Patricia Ruane	Sandra Moscoso	Valerie Jablow, EducationDC.net
Paula Kaplan	Sandra Ponce	Valerie Montana
Payton Persinger	Sara Norman	Wendy Bond
Qiana Hooker	Sarah Carlson Jackson	
Rachael Brown	Sarah Davidson	
Rachel Adenan	Sarah Rikken	
Rachel Delaney	Sarah Roma	
Rachel Edgerton	Sarah Silver	
Rachel Henighan	Sasha W Clayton	
Rachel Venator	Sean Farr	
Rasasa chikaka		