

SB1 – the Voucher Bill – is being fast-tracked through the Senate, is expected to be passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee today WITH AMENDMENTS so that it will apply to ALL school districts as well as “middle class” students; it is expected to be passed by the full Senate on Tuesday or Wednesday. **It is extremely important that you please telephone your senators’ offices TODAY asking them to oppose S.B.1.** Don’t let them sidetrack you with talk of amendments. These amendments are being made at the last minute, there is no opportunity for public input on the amendments or on SB1 with those amendments. This should not be rushed to a floor vote without opportunity for public review and input to their Senators. As far as Allegheny County Senators, Senator Pippy signed on as a co-sponsor on the current version of SB1. If Senator Pippy is your state senator, please contact Senator Pippy with your views not only on the current SB1, but also on the proposed amendments to expand “choice” to **middle class** students in **all** school districts. **Please forward this email to your fellow board members, superintendent, and please consider enlisting the help of your local PTA. It is extremely important to act quickly on this issue. Please encourage as many public education stakeholders as possible to do the same:**

Senate Contact Info:

http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/senators_alpha.cfm

Senate Email Addresses:

http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/email_list.cfm?body=S

FROM PSBA:

[More Info](#)

Voucher Bill to Move on Monday April 11 with Amendments to Expand Program

April 10, 2011

**Voucher Bill Expected to Move This Week;
Amendments to Expand Program Will Be Offered**

PSBA has learned that the Senate Appropriations Committee intends to amend and vote on SB 1, the taxpayer-funded tuition voucher bill, on Monday, April 11. A final vote on the Senate floor may occur as soon as Tuesday or Wednesday. If passed, SB 1 will move to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

Senate Democrats in the Appropriations Committee are expected to offer amendments, along with an omnibus amendment to be offered by Senate Republicans that will expand the program to provide vouchers to many more students to attend private and religious schools.

While no specific language has been made available at this time, it has been suggested that amendments will be offered so that vouchers will not just be targeted for the

poorest students whose family income does not exceed 130% of the federal poverty line, but will also be available to children whose family income is at 130% - 300% of the poverty level. In addition, the amendment would cap the costs in the third year of the voucher program so that funds would be available in conjunction with any excess tuition funds in order to give vouchers to more students.

Please call or email your senator immediately and ask him or her to vote "NO" on SB 1. In addition, it is not too early to contact your House members.

When you contact your legislator:

Questions about vouchers your legislator should be asking. Use these questions when talking about vouchers with your legislators and the media.

Pro-voucher arguments and rebuttals. Use this to respond to the arguments offered by voucher proponents on issues related to accountability, cost and constitutionality.

Other voucher news for Monday:

On Monday at noon, PSBA will be releasing the results of a new poll pertaining to accountability standards of private, religious and other nonpublic schools enrolling students with a taxpayer-funded tuition voucher. The new poll, conducted by Terry Madonna Opinion Research, asked survey participants three questions on accountability. This public opinion poll is our second voucher poll. Last fall, our poll showed that two-thirds of Pennsylvanians do not favor taxpayer monies being used to provide private school tuition vouchers. *Although another state poll shows small support for school choice, it did not connect the issue of choice and public taxpayer dollars to support parental choice.*

In addition, to the issue of unaffordability of vouchers, the issue of accountability must be the cornerstone of any discussion regarding vouchers, and SB 1 widely misses the mark on making any type of meaningful reform. This bill does not provide any academic accountability to students, parents and the public, nor does it provide any fiscal accountability to the taxpaying public that will be footing the bill for vouchers.

PSBA will keep you updated on the status of SB 1 following the action taken by the Appropriations Committee.