

STOP D.C. VOUCHERS NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

www.stopdcvouchers.org

September 15, 2003

Contact: Melody Webb

Melodywebb@lobbyline.com,

(202)554-8519, (202)276-9253, cell

Stop D.C. Vouchers Announces 'Listen to DC' Campaign

Website Allows EMAIL to Senate, Urges Senate Leadership to Stop Vouchers and Listen to DC Email

Senate May Vote on Vouchers This Week

Washington, D.C. - The full U.S. Senate could vote on voucher legislation this week. The voucher bill is on a fast track. A Senate committee passed a \$13 million voucher plan for D.C. on September 3. The House of Representatives last week approved a \$10 million plan for 1,300 D.C. children, with no provisions for the other 60,000 children in D.C.'s public school system. The D.C. City Council and D.C. School Board oppose school vouchers as do most D.C. residents. In response, Stop D.C. Vouchers announces its website-based email campaign to the Senate on two fronts: to express opposition to school vouchers and to protest the failure of Congress to welcome email from the city's residents, even as the Congress exercises legislative and fiscal oversight over D.C..

Today, Melody Webb, an attorney who heads Stop D.C. Vouchers, and a D.C. Public Schools parent released the following statement regarding the fast track movement of D.C. voucher legislation in Congress:

This week, the United States Senate may take advantage of the political disenfranchisement of D.C.'s 570,000 residents, and vote on a tragic education plan for a poor, African American school district, most certainly to be the first of many so afflicted across the nation if the voucher measure in Congress succeeds. The public can help put a stop to that, by visiting www.stopdcvouchers.org/stopdcvoucherstellsenate.htm and by emailing their Senators from the website with our letter or their own.

To add a gag to the shackles, Congress, in response to D.C. residents who attempt to complain about vouchers by using email, often rejects the email or discourages the communication, telling their de facto constituents that the member of Congress will only listen to those who elect them. This, in the face of the claim that the Senators and Congressmen claim to be acting in the interests of D.C. residents, and of their children in seeking to impose school vouchers. How does Congress know what those interests are, if they will not listen to D.C. residents? Why are they willing to listen to those who elect them, whose interests they also serve? The undeniable truth is that the only Americans

who have a voice in Congress are those with voting members. D.C. residents lack this; D.C. residents need this.

You can do something about stopping vouchers and about the lack of voice D.C. has in Congress. We announce the "Listen to DC" campaign, where members of the public, using an email form with our letter or their own, can demand of select members of the Senate leadership that until such time as they stop interfering in the affairs of D.C. and grant the residents of D.C. full self governance and their own voting representatives in the Senate and the Congress, that they should welcome, encourage and solicit the opinions of D.C. residents to the same extent as they do the opinions of those who represent them. To write these members visit www.listentodc.com/listentodcemail.htm.

Call to Action

Please call your member of Congress at (202)224-3121 and ask the Capitol Switchboard Operator to connect to your Congressman in the House and your Senator. Tell them to vote 'no' on D.C. vouchers. Visit <http://www.lobbyline.com/VouchcallSenate.htm> for more information on this issue and additional contact information for select members of Congress.