

STOP D.C. VOUCHERS NEWS RELEASE

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www.stopdcouchers.org

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Senate Voucher Proponents Hold the D.C. Appropriations Bill Hostage to Get School Vouchers Passed

Washington, DC- Stop D.C. Vouchers expresses outrage toward Senate ideologues who today used a school voucher amendment to hold the D.C. budget bill hostage. The Senate Appropriations Committee said that the bill will not come up again for a vote until late next week.

The voucher plan, which originates with Rep. Tom Davis' (R- Va.) Government Reform committee, has been presented in the Senate as a 'rider' attached to the D.C. Appropriations bill, a popular vehicle for Congress to get passed their own legislative proposals that are unpopular with D.C. residents. Included with the voucher plan in the Appropriations bill are several other objectionable amendments that are opposed by D.C. elected officials and residents.

"As was predicted, the voucher legislation came up as an add-on to D.C.'s budget bill. This is how it always goes. They blackmail the city's neediest residents who depend on the budget for critical services to extract their own legislative agenda. The plan is to hold up approval of D.C.'s locally-funded budget, until voucher opponents cry 'uncle,' and give in" states Melody Webb, a District of Columbia Public Schools parent and graduate and director of Stop D.C. Vouchers, an effort mobilizing pro-public education advocates to fight the voucher push. Webb also runs 'Leave D.C. Alone', an initiative to draw attention to the congressional riders attached to D.C.'s congressionally reviewed budget.

"The plan is to push this voucher initiative through under the threat of delaying services for D.C.'s children, mentally ill and elderly. Certain members of Congress repeatedly stoop to tying up our much needed locally raised dollars to get their way in D.C.. It's despicable; it's un-American that we can not spend our own locally raised tax dollars as we wish until Congress says. It is telling: if the conservatives pushing this voucher plan really cared about D.C.'s children, they would give their parents full democratic rights to run the school system without congressional interference so that public education can get the support that it needs. This is why we need not only a single vote in Congress, not only two Senators and a Congressman, but full democracy - self governance and representation in Congress - so that we are no longer vehicles for this ideological agenda of some members of Congress." stated Webb.

"Hooray for the Senate for taking a stand against vouchers. The Senate should not be forced to choose between vouchers (or any other nefarious riders) and smooth passage of

D.C.'s budget. The Senate is our hope, where because we have no representation, we must call upon members like Senator Mary Landrieu to stave off this voucher plan. We look to the Senate for a reasoned and responsive approach to what residents of D.C. are saying about vouchers. In accordance with what we really want, the Senate should say no to this voucher plan and allow the D.C. budget bill to pass through Congress." said Melody Webb.

Voucher opponents are urged to call the following members of the Senate Appropriations Committee and urge them to oppose a voucher program for D.C. by supporting ALL amendments against vouchers in the D.C. Appropriations bill: Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) at 202-224-5824, Sen. Conrad Burns (R-Mt.) at 202-224-2644, Sen. Christopher Bond (R-Mo.) at 202-224-5721 Sen. Ben Campbell (R-Co) at 202-224-5852 and Sen Arlen Specter (R-PA) at 202-224-4254.

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