



MEMO IN OPPOSITION

A.2551 (Cusick) S.1976 (Golden)

Governor’s Program Bill- Parental Choice in Education Act

We strongly oppose A.2551/S.1976 creating the Education Investment Incentives Tax Credit and the Governor’s Parental Choice in Education Act. These bills divert hundreds of millions of dollars away from public schools and services. In the first three years alone, \$675 million (\$450 million under the Governor’s program bill) would be siphoned from the General Fund – monies that should be supporting public schools and other public services.

Worse yet, this legislation does nothing to help low wealth, high-need students, or middle or low-income donors. Rather, it would allow the wealthy to avoid their tax liability while withholding the taxes they owe to support the public good.

We cannot continue to divert resources from our schools, communities and public services, while we ask our schools and students to raise standards and reach higher expectations.

New York's public school children are still owed nearly \$4.2 billion under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit and \$433 million under the Gap Elimination Adjustment. How can hundreds of millions of dollars in tax giveaways to the wealthy be justified when our public schools and students are still struggling and the state is not funding the sound basic education that its own constitution requires?

The introduction of this proposed scheme would create an annual funding battle between public and private schools and a never-ending debate over expansion of such credits.

The state Constitution also prohibits direct or indirect financial aid to private schools that are under the control of a religious denomination or where religious tenets are taught and mandates an adequately funded public school system. Private schools, their curriculum, and their funding structures are a choice. Public education is a constitutionally mandated function of state government, obligated to serve all children and accountable to all voters.

This tax giveaway is unprecedented in that it shifts state dollars - of which there are a finite amount - away from aid to public education and services and into privatized educational institutions.

We must properly support our public schools and services that serve our communities. For the aforementioned reasons, we strongly oppose this legislation and urge its defeat.

Organizations in Opposition to the Education Investment Incentive Credit

A. Philip Randolph Institute	New York City Council of School Supervisors and Administrators
AFSCME	New York Civil Liberties Union
Advocates for Children of New York	New York State AFL-CIO
Alliance for Quality Education	New York State Association of School Business Officials
Americans United for the Separation of Church & State	New York State Federation of School Administrators
Anti-Defamation League	New York State PTA
Balcony	New York State School Boards Association
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty	New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU)	New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness
Citizen Action	People for the American Way
CSEA	Public Employees Federation (PEF)
CSA	Reform Jewish Voice of NYS
DC 37, AFSCME	Rochester – Finger Lakes Pride @ Work
Hindu American Foundation	Rural Schools Association of NYS
Interfaith Alliance of NYS – Greater Albany Area	School Administrators Association of New York State
Interfaith Alliance of Long Island	Secular Coalition for New York
Interfaith Impact of NYS	Strong Economy for All
La Fuente	The Black Institute
League of Women Voters of NYS	The Center for Inquiry
Local 372, DC37, AFSCME	The Clergy Campaign
Long Island Jobs with Justice	The Council of School Superintendents
Long Island Progressive Coalition	The School Superintendents Association
Make the Road	United Federation of Teachers (UFT)
NAACP-NYS Chapter	Working Families