The Arizona state Senate has passed a bill underlying the will of the people. This bill would fund students in public schools and direct it toward students attending private religious schools. Two studies of Arizona’s 1.1 million public school students would become eligible for these vouchers, a huge expansion of the School Scholarship Accounts. The Senate should not pass this bill. Do not allow 60,000 students.

Under the scheme, parents receive 50 per cent of the tax funds that would go to their student’s school district. Some students would avoid a school they can receive as much as $2,000 per year.

The proposed program anti-democratic and elitist. Arizona voters by a 2-1 margin rejected the expansion of the school voucher program two years ago. The scheme will not work. This has been proven by bills (and plans) in study after study. A 2018 Arizona State University study revealed that Arizona’s vouchers don’t create school choice for children in public schools; they simply help the few who can afford the extra expense.

Another recent study revealed dangerous trends simply sitting on the money, with $58,000 and even $100,000 school accounts. The proposal argues for fraud, self-dealing and abuse, as the New York Times reported about privatized voucher schemes.

This bill is being hailed by some as a help for students with disabilities, private religious schools do discriminate against these students — and (LGBTQ) students, and anyone else they deem different. Tax payers shouldn’t be fund-

ing the discrimination.

Our public school system should receive unsupportive gift. If any better schools, the solution is not to pri-

ivate but make our public schools better. This alone is not enough. We should do any and all that is possible to support our public schools. That is the way it should be the norm.

The bill would undermine public schools, have a negative effect on public schools, and lessen support for religious education. Kyle Gilson, creator and chair of National School Choice Week, knows how important this is. He would like to think that, yes, teachers can destroy the public educa-

tion system and prevent the children from degenerating.Nearly all voucher schools in Arizona are religious and cater to the recipients of vouchers. They are also anti-democratic and elitist.

Last month, we cele-

brate National School Choice Week. The day that the Virgin-

ia legislature passed the Virginia Scholarship Act for Religious Freedom. In that law, Thomas Jefferson explained that “to compel a man to furnish con-

trivances out of his own pocket for the support of an institution, to which he disbelieves, and which he abhors, is sinfull and tyrannical.”

A similar guarantee cannot be found in landfills and treasuries, and you should know that Jefferson is a public, and not religious education. The Arizona Legisa-

ture must not proceed to enact a demonstration of how anti-religious freedom it is.

Arizona’s districts and charter school operating under the Arizona’s Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESA) school voucher program. The ESA is a national state/ federal partnership that brings funding and accountability toward students from all walks of life to help their children find better learning settings.

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