

January 17, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a product of public schools. I received a wonderful education from the ages of 5 to 21 in Iowa public schools. I am proud to tell people from outside of this state that I was offered a free education from wonderfully qualified teachers at elementary and secondary schools and at a state university. The great part about this education was that all different types of people were at my schools: immigrants, students with special needs, kids from various religions, and so forth. Everyone had an equal opportunity to learn.

According to Governor Reynolds, the voucher bill that is being proposed will open up more opportunities for the children of Iowa. But, indeed it will do the opposite. Private schools do not have to open their doors to ALL students. They get to select who they want and can accept. Public schools must accept all students, no matter their ability level, socioeconomic status, color of their skin, religious views, or sexual orientation. My tax money should not support private schools who can pick and choose who they want to accept.

My husband is a transplant from Massachusetts. He came to Iowa knowing the good reputation of our schools. We have two children who have graduated from Iowa public schools and another child still in school. Sadly, my husband is ready to leave because he is disgusted by the policies that our politicians are currently proposing. Is this what our state wants? People moving away because of the education system?

This issue is near and dear to my heart. I am a 30-year veteran of teaching. I have taught in public schools my entire career and plan to retire from my current public high school within the next 5-8 years. I am not a Republican or a Democrat. I am for doing what is good and right for our kids. I have friends and colleagues who send their children to private schools and I can respect that. Many of them do not support this proposed law either. Several of the bills being proposed are NOT in the best interest of a majority of our children. I am asking you to look beyond your political party agenda and special interest money and make Iowa Public Schools a priority for ALL of our children.

Thank you for your time.  
Jennifer Hamel