

Universal vouchers: Like the ECOT fiasco, could result in fraud and in billions of public dollars being spent with no accountability to those who foot the bill—Ohio taxpayers.

The ECOT Man, William Lager stole at least a half billion from Ohio taxpayers. He did this because he could. State officials turned a blind eye to his operation while he was transferring tax money from the public treasury to his personal portfolio and to the campaign coffers of numerous state officials. For about 15 years, Lager was paid for the number of students he reported (on the honor system). This was in accordance with an agreement he had worked out with the state during the second year of his scam operation.

A few state officials eventually figured out that the state would appear idiotic if the ECOT self-reporting scam became public. The state finally audited the ECOT enrollment data and found a \$60 million overpayment in one year alone. After ECOT shut down, the state began to pursue Lager for repayment of some of the money he stole from the students of the state; the court ruled that Lager owed the state \$160 million. However, after 7 years, the state has not collected one dime from Lager.

State officials have not learned from the ECOT fiasco. Billions are in the voucher pipeline with little or no accountability requirements. Scam and fraud bubble-up easily when accountability and transparency are opaque.

Headlines are made if a public school treasurer, either mistakenly or on purpose, misuses a dollar. Yet billions are in the pipeline for vouchers for which there is limited or no accountability.

Where is the outrage?