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### **Peter Greene: Vouchers are not rescuing poor students from failing public schools**

Peter Greene gets to the heart of the voucher scam. Vouchers subsidize private school costs for families that were already in private schools. The voucher purveyors are changing their labels to education freedom instead of education choice.

The voucher business plan is very simple. Parents line up to get funds from the public treasury—freedom from paying bills one made an obligation to pay.

**Wednesday, October 25, 2023**

### **Vouchers Are Not Rescuing Poor Students From Failing Public Schools**

Voucher program after voucher program is launched with the same promise--this program will rescue disadvantaged students from public schools that can't get the job done. But now that they've been around for a few years, we can see pretty clearly what they actually do.

They expand.

They subsidize private school costs for families that were already in private schools.

[To view embedded graph click [here](#) ]

Arizona's program is growing into a [state budget buster](#). New Hampshire's state subsidy for private school tuition is mushrooming in just three years, and roughly 90% of the students using vouchers are still students who were already in private school. Iowa's program cost looks to be tremendous, with 19,000 students approved for vouchers.

Arkansas is joining the crowd, and provides a fine example of how these programs grow and who they actually benefit.

Arkansas's voucher program was set up to start with disabled and low-income students. One immediate effect has been a boom in the Fake Your Way To Disability industry in Arkansas, where options to "prove" your eligibility include "a note from your doctor." [And the Arkansas Times has learned](#) that many students qualifying for vouchers didn't not even clear that low bar. It's a bit of a Catch-22, as students often have difficulty getting admitted to a private school if they have an IEP, 504 plan, or disability. Still, almost half of Arkansas's voucher students were approved based on some sort of claim of disability.

That may contribute to Arkansas's numbers-- of its voucher users, 95% did not attend a public school last year.

And the program is only slated to expand as the bars for qualifying are lowered even further.

Proponents of vouchers, like Governor Reynolds of Iowa, point at the expansion and huge cost runs as signs that families were "hungry for educational freedom." Well, no. What it shows is that families like free money from the state to help pay for the expenses they have already freely chosen for their children.

This is why you'll notice that voucher fans like calling vouchers "educational freedom" instead of "educational choice." The main beneficiaries of these programs are not looking for school choice--they

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have already exercised the readily available choice in their state, and now they are only too happy to let the state's taxpayers help foot the bill. I don't blame them for that; who wouldn't appreciate a little government largesse. I blame the policy makers and the private schools.

It's not a rescue for the poor; it's an entitlement for the well-to-do. The freedom it's offering is the freedom from paying your own bills.

Posted by [Peter Greene](#) at [Wednesday, October 25, 2023](#)