

A lawmaker trying to justify state tax funds for Education Savings Accounts for use at unregulated, non-chartered, nonpublic schools (HB 339): This means that their parents continue to pay twice for education; once through taxation and a second time through tuition.

As a taxpayer I support (through my taxes) public schools whether or not I use them. Public education is a public good. Public education is good for communities, the state, and the nation---economically, socially, and politically. Public education and democracy have a synergism that is essential for both. All citizens have a stake in ensuring high quality educational opportunities for all.

When citizens choose not to use the public system, they are not entitled to take their tax money with them to another venue. The tax is for the public system, not a private system. The legislator is wrong to indicate that when a citizen chooses to use a private school, they are double taxed. Some of my tax money goes to the public parks and recreation system to provide a public good. If I want to join a Country Club or other private provider, I should not expect my fellow taxpayers to pay for my private choice. I pay taxes to the public good, not for my private choice.

HP 339 is egregious on at least two counts. It would require tax funds for private purposes. It would also force taxpayers to fund a system that has absolutely no transparency and accountability to the public. These non-chartered, nonpublic schools are neither regulated nor monitored by the public. HB339 is a government subsidy to folks who abhor public oversight of any kind. Hypocrisy comes to mind.