

The Ohio Constitution and various court decisions protect the right of all youth to a high-quality education (via the public common school system), but the Ohio universal voucher law gives a selected class of folks a tax-supported private choice with no rights guaranteed by law.

As the voucher scheme policy has evolved from the state's mandated Cleveland Voucher Program (rescue the poor kids!) in the mid-1990's to Senate President Huffman's universal voucher program in 2024, the poor kids have been lost in the shuffle. The affluent are the beneficiaries of the current voucher policy. The universal voucher scheme is an affront to the intent and plain wording of the supreme law of the state and the protections inherent in the U.S. Constitution.

The framers of the Ohio Constitution and Ohio citizens in the past protected the rights of all youth to a high-quality education via the common school system. The common school system protects the right of poor children to high-quality, regulated educational opportunities.

The framers of the 1802 Ohio Constitution seemed to be concerned about how well poor kids would be treated by the legislature. Article VIII, section 25 states:

That no law shall be passed to prevent the poor in the several counties and townships within this sate from an equal participation in the schools, academies, colleges and universities within this state, which are endowed, in whole or in part, from the revenue arising from donations made by the United States, for the support of schools and colleges; and the doors of the said schools, academies and universities, shall be open for the reception of scholars, students and teachers, of every grade, without any distinction or preference whatever, contrary to the intent for which said donations were made.

The current constitutional provision for education requires the legislature to secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools. The Constitution's designation of "common schools" guarantees all students—rich and poor—an education.

The private school sector only guarantees that students of their selection will receive education.

The U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v Board of Education* ruled that states must provide education to students on equal terms. The court tossed out the "separate but equal" doctrine.

As the voucher campaign will play out (until there is judicial intervention) school districts will be starved of funds, while educating a higher concentration of children of poverty and disabilities.