

**For the past 45 years, US Presidents have helped advance the agenda of privatizers of public education.**

President Reagan's Nation at Risk report was designed to blame public education for a sagging U.S. economy. The Report had no correlation with the data gathered by the study committee. Upon receiving the extremely flawed Report, Reagan applauded it because he said it recommended prayer in school and private school vouchers. (The Report was silent on both issues.) Three decades earlier, Economist Milton Friedman, in 1954, declared that the government should shed responsibility for education, except for funding vouchers for use at private schools. However, at the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) in 2006, Friedman essentially said that public education was a mistake and that parents should personally bear the cost of educating their own children.

No president since Jimmy Carter has enthusiastically advocated for public education. Reagan promoted school vouchers. Bush 41 pushed the school voucher agenda. Clinton seemed more interested in charter schools than traditional public schools. Bush 43, in cahoots with congressional leaders from both political parties, cobbled together the disastrous No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation that, whether intentional or not, took the joy out of learning. Obama, with Arne Duncan in the U.S. Department of Education pushing the Every Student Succeeds Act and the Race to the Top project, in many respects, put NCLB on steroids in terms of tarnishing the image of public education. The Biden administration did not particularly champion public schools. Trump is on record as an opponent of public education.

While public education has been inappropriately maligned by the highest office in the land for nearly five decades, the education privatizers have been successful in milking the public treasury of most states and the federal government to nourish private schools and privately-operated charter schools.

Private schools and privately-operated charter schools are thriving on tax funds to the detriment of the public common school system required by the Constitutions of each of the 50 states.

What is the end game of the education privatizers? Their goal is the elimination of the public common school system, except for a placement for the extremely disadvantaged students and those with disabilities.

The EdChoice voucher litigation has a dual purpose: end the EdChoice voucher scheme and restore public education to its rightful place of sustain democracy. The entire public education community needs to get on board with this effort!