

**Allen County Educational Service Center Superintendent, Craig Kupferberg's article published in the Toledo Blade takes issue with several legislative actions, including the introduction of HB671—The Bully Bill.**

In a recent Toledo Blade article, Craig Kupferberg expressed his deeply felt concerns regarding how state officials are harming public schools. He cites several examples. Among those is HB671 by Representative Jamie Callender which would confiscate funds from school districts that are members of the Coalition/Vouchers Hurt Ohio (VHO).

Since the introduction of HB671, the sponsor has publicly stated he will revise HB671 to reduce the amount of funding the state would confiscate from Coalition-member districts.

**To the editor: Voucher policies have undercut GOP values CRAIG KUPFERBERG**

I have been a lifelong Republican and a consistent voter in every election and primary. I have twice run for public office and have spent more than 41 years serving families and children as a public school educator. Throughout that time, I supported many Republican candidates.

It is with genuine sadness that I now publicly state that I can no longer consider myself a Republican, nor can I support Republican candidates in the State of Ohio.

Most Ohioans are unaware that many public officials—including school board members, superintendents, and treasurers—are required to file annual financial disclosure statements with the Ohio Ethics Commission to ensure there are no conflicts of interest involving taxpayer dollars. Recently, the Ohio Ethics Commission considered recommending an extension of this requirement to board members of public charter schools.

That proposal was abandoned after objections from legislative leadership, including Senate President Rob McColley and House Speaker Matt Huffman, Republicans representing northwest Ohio. Transparency and accountability in the use of public funds were once core conservative principles. Apparently, that is no longer the case.

Speaker Huffman, when he was President of the Senate, also inserted Ohio's universal voucher expansion into the state budget at the last moment, avoiding meaningful public debate. The cost of the program is now costing Ohio taxpayers a sum approaching \$1 billion annually. At the same time, he opposed the Fair School Funding Plan—a bipartisan, two-year effort developed by educators, treasurers, Republicans, and Democrats alike. One of its sponsors, former Speaker Bob Cupp, was trusted across party lines during a period when Ohio was recovering from the largest public corruption scandal in state history.

Today, Ohio sends more taxpayer dollars per student to privately run schools than to its public schools—schools governed by locally elected boards. These private schools receive public funds with no government oversight for financial accountability, and the individuals making spending decisions are not required to report to the Ohio Ethics Commission. In Northwest Ohio alone (arguably the most conservative region of the State), then Senator Huffman's District 12, lost approximately \$40 million in funding and current Senate President Rob McColley's District 1, lost approximately \$50 million in funding during the 2024-2025 school year. All of those dollars (I removed the dollars returned to private schools in their districts from the totals) have been redistributed to urban areas through the voucher program.

More than 300 Ohio public school districts have now joined the "Vouchers Hurt Ohio" lawsuit challenging this system. In response, a Republican legislator has introduced House Bill 671, which would defund any district participating in that lawsuit. Using state power to retaliate against public schools for seeking judicial review is deeply troubling—and wholly inconsistent with conservative values.

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Since the Ohio Republican Party leadership has turned their backs on conservative values—opposing transparency, defunding public schools, shielding taxpayer dollars from oversight, and redistributing wealth away from the rural areas—then I want no part of it.

*Kupferberg of Findlay is superintendent for the Allen County Educational Service Center and former principal of Findlay High School. He ran in the Republican primary for state Senate against McColley in 2018.*