

Private school voucher bill rejected in Mississippi

School vouchers were rejected in Mississippi. Republicans in Mississippi control the offices of governor and lieutenant governor, as well as the House and Senate.

Democratic Party Chairman, Representative Cheikh Taylor stated in a press release: "...Mississippi will not abandon the students and families who depend on quality public education—no matter how much out-of-state money tries to buy our legislators."

The big money dilberts in our nation seem to be working in every state to destroy public education via vouchers and other private ventures.

Private-School Voucher Bill Dies in Mississippi Senate; House Passes \$5,000 Teacher Pay Raise

by [Heather Harrison](#) February 3, 2026

JACKSON, Miss.—Mississippi will not expand its school voucher program to use public tax dollars for private school tuition after the Mississippi Senate Education Committee killed the House's [massive education package](#), [House Bill 2](#), on Tuesday.

"This committee has passed, and it's on the calendar, most everything in H.B. 2 except for some charter school legislation, the voucher bill—ESAs as the House calls them," Mississippi Senate Education Committee Chairman Sen. Dennis DeBar, R-Leakesville, told members during a minute-long Tuesday afternoon meeting.

Mississippi Sen. Brice Wiggins, R-Pascagoula, entered a motion to vote on advancing the bill to the Mississippi Senate floor. The Republican-led committee held a voice vote on the motion, and none of its members spoke in favor of the bill, including Wiggins.

"The nos have it. The bill dies today," DeBar declared.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves, a Republican, harshly criticized DeBar and Republican Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann, the Senate president, for the bill's defeat in a Facebook post Wednesday morning, saying that after 23 years in office, he had "never been more disappointed in elected officials" than he is now with the Senate Education Committee chairman and the lieutenant governor.

"They killed a Republican legislative priority shared by conservatives all across this country and they worked closely with the Democrats to do it," Reeves wrote. "Even worse—they tried to do it in the dark and hide it from MS conservatives on a deadline day."

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves speaks at a bill signing during the 2025 legislative session. MFP Photo by Heather Harrison

The Mississippi Democratic Party celebrated the legislation's failure.

"Today's vote shows what we can accomplish when we stand together for Mississippi's children against well-funded special interests," Mississippi Democratic Party Chairman Rep. Cheikh Taylor, D-Starkville, said in a Tuesday press release. "Our public schools are the cornerstone of every community in this state, and this unanimous rejection sends a clear message: Mississippi will not abandon the students and families who depend on quality public education—no matter how much out-of-state money tries to buy our legislators."

H.B. 2 includes over a dozen K-12 related education proposals, such as [school vouchers](#), charter school reform, extracurricular participation for homeschooled students, expanded literacy and math requirements, an assistant teacher pay raise and adjustments to the Mississippi Public Employees' Retirement System.

The Mississippi House narrowly [passed the legislation on Jan. 15](#) by a 61-59 vote.

“The picture that opponents have painted is one of private school versus public school. But let me be clear: This is not a war between public and private education. They should be complementing each other,” Mississippi House Rep. Celeste Hurst, R-Sandhill, said when introducing the bill in the House chamber in January.

H.B. 2 is dead and will not move any further in the legislative process.

“Our concern with HB 2 is that it moves Mississippi away from a shared public commitment to education and toward a model that fragments funding and responsibility,” Union Public School District Superintendent Tyler Hansford said in a Jan. 29 [Newton County Appeal opinion article](#). “Public dollars should be used to sustain public systems that serve all students and communities, not to convert a public good into a marketplace transaction.”

House Passes \$5,000 Teacher Pay Raise

On Tuesday afternoon, the House Education Committee passed a \$5,000 teacher pay raise that includes an \$8,000 pay raise for licensed special education teachers in special education classrooms. That bill, [House Bill 1126](#), also includes a structured cap on school superintendents’ salaries, changes to PERS’ years of service requirements, an increase to the Mississippi Student Funding Formula base student cost and a pay raise for school attendance officers’ starting salaries.

The [Senate passed three education bills](#) on Jan. 7: a \$2,000 teacher pay raise bill, legislation to bring Mississippi Public Employees’ Retirement System retirees to the classroom and a bill making it easier to transfer from one public school district to another. DeBar said at the time that he would like to expand the Senate’s proposed pay raise to \$5,000. All three bills await action in the House.

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