

Listing of some of the media coverage of HB671, much of which resulted from the Coalition/VHO press conference on February 12.

Dennis Willard, President of Precision New Media compiled a listing of media articles regarding HB671, the Bully Bill, that would require the State to abscond funds from school districts that have passed a resolution to join the EdChoice voucher litigation.

The response to this proposed legislation was fast and furious. The media interest was and still is intense.

Some of the media coverage is assembled below.

TIMELINE AND RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATIVE CALLENDER'S HB671.

Tuesday, Feb. 3 - Laura Hancock breaks story that Callender will introduce legislation (HB 671) to withhold state funding for any public schools that participate in Vouchers Hurt Ohio lawsuit.

VHO immediately responds with a statement to press statewide that it is yet another attempt to bully and intimidate because the state has no constitutional response to our lawsuit. (Judge Jaiza Page ruled in June, 2025 that EdChoice is unconstitutional on 3 counts - it is now before the 10th District Court of Appeals).

<https://www.cleveland.com/open/2026/02/ohio-bill-would-cut-funding-to-school-districts-suing-over-vouchers.html>

Monday, Feb. 9 - State Senator Jerry Cirino tells Karen Kasler he supports Callender. They drink the same Lake County water, apparently. Quote from Kasler's story: "Cirino is not a lawyer, so he isn't sure if the bill is constitutional, but (he says) "it shouldn't stop us from doing what we think is the right thing."

Yes, he did say that.

Former Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Eric Brown, and VHO Steering Committee Chairman, tells Kasler: "The school districts have a long-standing constitutional right to pursue legal action on behalf of their students."

https://www.stateneews.org/government-politics/2026-02-09/key-senator-backs-bill-to-allow-ohio-to-hold-back-money-if-schools-sue-over-funding?_amp=true

Thursday, Feb. 12 - Vouchers Hurt Ohio holds a press conference in the Ladies' Gallery in the Ohio Statehouse featuring four speakers: VHO Lead Attorney Mark Wallach, Judge Brown, Jocelyn Rhynard, Dayton Schools board member, Bill Phillis, VHO and E&A Coalition to denounce Callender's "Public School Bully Bill."

We broadcast the press conference live on Facebook and more than a dozen reporters, including four television outlets, cover the presser.

Watch the Facebook press conference

here: <https://www.facebook.com/VouchersHurtOH/videos/2062020961033411>

In the first day, the FB post had more than 1,000 views and it has more than 4,700 views to date.

Stories immediately went up on line and continued throughout the news cycle into Friday, Feb. 13, an unlucky day for Callender.

At the press conference, Mark Wallach, our lead attorney, said we had a serious lawsuit and Callender's bill was not a serious piece of legislation. It was blatantly unconstitutional and the coalition would immediately go to court should it pass and file an injunction and we would win.

Judge Brown called the bill "outrageous" and said it was an attempt to bully and intimidate the more than 330 school districts in our coalition and it would not work.

Joceyln Rhynard warned this was a slippery slope and could lead to intimidating other governmental entities - cities, counties, townships, etc. She also noted the DeRolph case, in which the Ohio Supreme Court ruled four times that the public school funding formula is unconstitutional, would have not happened if Callender's proposal had been in effect.

Bill Phillis thanked Rep. Callender for helping us recruit school districts by showing just how unfair he and his colleagues in the legislature are toward public schools. The VHO coalition grew by 50 percent after then Senate President Matt Huffman and State Auditor Keith Faber tried to intimidate and bully our districts.

Here are just a few headlines from the press conference and links to stories:

[330 Ohio school districts rally against revised bill targeting EdChoice funding](#)

[Bill penalizing schools for suing state unconstitutional, anti-voucher group says | The Blade](#)

[School districts blast bill that would withhold state funding if they sue Ohio | The Statehouse News Bureau](#)

The press conference was picked up by media in almost every market across Ohio.

Friday, Feb. 13

Morgan Trau, a statehouse TV reporter for stations in Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati who also writes syndicated stories for the Ohio Capital Journal, managed to interview Callender and he blinked, big time.

Callender told Trau he only wanted to start a conversation and that he was going to amend the bill to just withhold from suing districts the money they were spending on the lawsuit.

Trau notes VHO has spend \$1.7 million on the lawsuit in six years by collecting \$2 per pupil per year from coalition districts. She juxtaposes this to \$1.7 billion (with a B) the state will send to private schools in the next two years.

View Trau's story here:

[Lawmaker reverses course on bill to restrict money for Ohio school districts that sue over vouchers](#)

Dan Heintz, a Cleveland Heights University Heights board member, tears Callender's ideas to pieces in this piece.

Monday, Feb. 16

Vouchers Hurt Ohio issues a press release continuing to condemn Callender's proposal even if he is backtracking and tap dancing.

Judge Brown states: "The bill will penalize school districts and continues to be unconstitutional Whether it is a dime or \$1 million, it's unconstitutional."

Wallach states: "If they pass this bill, we will immediately move to challenge it with an injunction, and we will win because it is blatantly unconstitutional."

Phillis states: Rep. Callender presents his proposed legislation as though the coalition is somehow wasting school funds, using it on frivolous litigation. Our lawsuit uncovered a blatant problem in the way state lawmakers continue to inadequately and inequitably fund our public schools. Judge Page has already found this program, EdChoice, to be unconstitutional."

CC4261 2.23.26 Monday PM

The same day, Cleveland.com | The Cleveland Plain Dealer's Mary France McGowan tries to follow up on Trau's story from Friday, but now Callender is no longer talking to the press and neither is his office.

The bill has been assigned to the House Finance Committee. Callender has zero, count them, zero co-sponsors.

Ouch.

There are too many people to thank, but the entire Steering Committee stood strong, thanks to the school district members who reached out in support, thanks to Eve Bolton in Cincinnati and Barbara Sykes in Akron and Columbus City Schools for weighing in on localized coverage from Gannett.

Thanks to Denis Smith for a great Op/Ed in the Dispatch:

[Ohio GOP legislation threatens First Amendment](#)

Thanks to Mike Curtin, former Columbus Dispatch Editor and Associate Publisher and two-term state lawmaker who served on the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission, for two deeply researched columns that ran in September, 2025 and in January of this year that lays out why the the Ohio Supreme Court should, if the justices hold true to their beliefs and principles, find EdChoice vouchers unconstitutional.

Read both of them here:

[Why Ohioans said private schools shouldn't be funded with our money 174 years ago | Opinion](#)

[History isn't on side of those claiming Ohio must fund religious schools | Opinion](#)

Final thoughts: Callender felt the backlash for his Bully Bill from educators, school boards, superintendents, treasurers, parents, community members and so many everyday Ohioans who already oppose public tax dollars going to private schools.

It was brutal online.

This is not a partisan issue. Ohioans support their local public schools. This is a foundational idea. Their public schools are the bedrock of their community and they recognize the threat posed by EdChoice vouchers.

Here are two interesting Op/Eds.

Thanks to Kathy Wyenandt in Butler County for sending us the Hamilton Journal Op/ed written by Dan Bates with Butler County Chamber of Commerce entitled:

"Ohio school funding crossroads: A wake-up call for the business community"

Sorry about the crazy long link.

<https://www.journal-news.com/news/ohio-school-funding-crossroads-a-wake-up-call-for-the-business-community/DZJNUQO25BCC5KKBQXNJE4MDZA/?fbclid=IwY2xjawP-4WdleHRuA2F1bQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjJwMzIxNzg4MjAwODkyAAE0ktMYCqDT4Hds3DyDGmtiuiC1HJH618K IreaMHShPKws8xjCnJvJqRNOBc aem S11sRtwpqk6nlll1L5zrlw>

And finally, here is an op/ed in the Toledo Blade from Craig Kupferberg, Supt. for the Allen County ESC, former principal at Findlay High School, who lives in House Speaker Matt Huffman's district.

[To the editor: Voucher policies have undercut GOP values | The Blade](#)