

**The Education Savings Accounts (ESA's) provision in the House version of the State Budget is a Pandora's Box, a deranged public policy.**

Universal EdChoice vouchers available to even multi-billionaires, is a taxpayer nightmare. The Education Savings Accounts (ESA's) concept is worse. The Ohio House version of ESA's is calamitous for taxpayers and students.

The House version of the state budget authorizes vouchers for use at nonchartered nonpublic religious schools. This Ohio House version, which permits ESA's, would provide students vouchers for use in nonchartered private schools at a tab of up to \$50 million annually. These nonchartered nonpublic schools can be started and operated by anyone by merely informing the school district superintendent that the school exists. Vast expansion of this type of "school" is imminent.

There are in the range of 13,000 religious congregations in Ohio. Suppose that 10% of those congregations decided to expand their Sunday school program to five-day per week programs in order to take advantage of ESA's.

The ultimate consequence of this ESA mania is government subsidization of religion. This is wrongheaded, both for taxpayers and religion. In the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of II Samuel, a man offers, at no cost, everything necessary for King David to offer a sacrifice to God, to which David replied: "Neither will I offer sacrifice of that which cost me nothing." Some modern-day religious folks would respond, "Give me tax money so that I don't have to sacrifice to practice my religion."