



TSTA NEWS

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TSTA applauds death of voucher bill, remains angry at state leaders who put vouchers over funding for public schools, teachers and students

Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina released the following statement:

The death of the voucher bill is a victory for public education and Texas taxpayers. This voucher plan would have worsened the budgetary problems of under-funded public schools while enriching unregulated private schools with tax dollars.

TSTA applauds Rep. Ken King and the other House members who stood up for public education and against vouchers after the Senate had hijacked House Bill 100, the school funding measure, with vouchers and Senate conferees refused to negotiate.

Had it passed, the voucher portion of that bill would have cost public schools and taxpayers one-half billion dollars over the next two years and billions of additional dollars in the years to follow.

We are still angry that Gov. Abbott, Lt. Gov. Patrick and their allies gave private schools a higher priority than public schools, while wasting an opportunity to use a record \$33 billion budget surplus to give underpaid teachers and other school employees meaningful pay raises and increase the classroom resources that public schools need for their students.

Instead, average teacher pay in Texas will continue to trail the national average by more than \$7,700, and thousands of Texas teachers (an estimated 40 percent) will be forced to continue taking second or third jobs during the school year to meet their families' needs. Still other teachers are likely to leave the profession they can no longer afford, worsening the teacher shortage. The ultimate losers will be school children who will lose the teaching experience and classroom resources they need for success.

We hope that Gov. Abbott understands the message from the voucher bill's failure and the strong anti-voucher vote in the House earlier this session and gives up his plans to waste legislators' time and taxpayers' money on a special session for another futile attempt to pass a voucher bill.

But if he renews his voucher attack against public schools, we will be ready to continue our fight to protect public education.