

Con:

# Private-School Choice Would Destroy Public Education

by Cecil Banks

*School vouchers, tax credits, and other private-school choice options would destroy the public schools by diverting much-needed funds to private and religious schools. The state would incur large expenses in paying tuition for public-school students who transfer to private schools as well as those already enrolled in private schools—creating a new welfare program for the wealthy. School-choice options that would provide public money for tuition at religious schools would violate the separation of church and state clause in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Plus, using state money to support private or religious schools would violate the public purpose clause of the N.C. Constitution. Proponents say private-school choice options would create competition that would force public schools to improve. But public schools can't compete on the same terms because private schools can exclude students who are less intelligent, cause disciplinary problems, or have learning disabilities. Furthermore, studies show that private schools are no better than public schools when socio-economic factors are taken into account.*



Karen Tam

**P**ublic schools, equally accessible to all of our nation's children, weave together the diverse elements of America's society into one cloth. Yet public schools have come under fire in recent years from critics who say that educational fabric has become frayed.

The debate over school reform often centers on vouchers, tax credits, and other types of private-school choice. Essentially, private-school choice is being promoted by individuals

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Essentially, private-school choice is being promoted by individuals who, for whatever reason, would indict the public schools for failing to perform adequately. These critics, in the guise of helping to improve education and save it from collapse, seek to replace our system of public schools—which are open to all children—with vouchers or tax credits that would transfer scarce tax dollars to private schools—which are selectively available only to some children.



who, for whatever reason, would indict the public schools for failing to perform adequately. These critics, in the guise of helping to improve education and save it from collapse, seek to replace our system of public schools—which are open to all children—with vouchers or tax credits that would transfer scarce tax dollars to private schools—which are selectively available only to some children.

Such proposals are based on a false premise. Our public schools are not failing America. “The many allegations that the education system has tumbled in recent decades constitute ‘The Big Lie,’” says Gerald Bracey, an educational psychologist and researcher.<sup>1</sup> Studies show, in fact, that student achievement is scarcely different in public and private schools—despite private schools’ ability to select students from the wealthiest and most favored backgrounds.

Proposals to privatize America’s public schools via vouchers or tax credits also tend to deny the public interest in education. They assume that only individual parents have an abiding interest in education, while ignoring the benefits to society from providing an educational system that is open to all. Now, let’s look more closely at these concepts of private-school choice.

### Vouchers Are Nothing New

In recent times, vouchers have come to signify a manner of funding private and often religious schools with public dollars. But the support of private schools with public money is not a new concept. Such proposals date back at least to the 1950s, following the U.S. Supreme Court’s school desegregation decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>2</sup> For instance, the state of Virginia adopted a tax-supported voucher plan that enabled white students to

attend freedom-of-choice schools.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the Georgia legislature enacted—but never funded—scholarship grants as a means of financing white students’ tuition at segregated academies.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the first voucher programs were designed to maintain systems of segregated schools.

The voucher concept was revived in a big way in the 1980s, a decade in which many political, educational, and corporate leaders touted private solutions to public problems. We can see now that these private solutions were no solutions at all. Instead, such privatization has led to an incongruous mix of diminished government services, increased government costs, and unprecedented government deficits. The 1980s also left us with the false promise of private-school choice.

Several variations of private-school choice have been proposed. In the most common model, the state would issue tax vouchers or tuition grants to the parents of school-age children, to be paid to any school willing to admit them as students. Depending on the particular plan, the admitting school could be public or private, secular or religious. Other plans would grant tax credits or deductions to parents, rather than outright cash payments.

The dollar value of vouchers or tax credits varies with plans. Most plans deal primarily with state funding, but some proposals would involve the transfer of local tax money to private schools. Additional costs such as transportation and administration must be estimated for each plan.

Using public money to support private and religious schools would clearly violate the constitutions of both the United States and North Carolina. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the separation of church and state.<sup>5</sup> Plus, public support for private schools could be illegal under the public purpose clause (Article V) of the N.C. Constitution.<sup>6</sup> “The public purpose doctrine basi-

cally says that you can't use tax money for anything that is not a public purpose," says Deborah Ross, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of N.C. "This doesn't just apply to religious schools but to private schools as well."

## Proponents Battle for Vouchers and Tax Credits on Three Fronts

**P**roponents of vouchers and tax credits have organized a nationwide network with a unified campaign strategy. That battle is now being fought on three fronts: in ballot initiatives, in state courts, and in state legislatures.

Voucher proposals have not fared well in public referendums and ballot initiatives. Since 1990, voters have defeated school voucher initiatives by 2-to-1 margins in California, Colorado, and Oregon. Probably the most visible battlefield was in California, where voters in 1993 considered a ballot initiative [Proposition 174] that would have provided parents with vouchers worth \$2,600 per child that could be redeemed at any public, private, or religious school in the state. Voters rejected that measure by a 70 percent to 30 percent margin.<sup>7</sup> The California election marked the 19th time in 20 ballot initiatives since 1966 in which voters have rejected proposals to funnel tax dollars to private schools.<sup>8</sup> The only initiative approved was a textbook loan program in South Dakota.<sup>9</sup>

Voucher proponents also are pressing their case in the courts. Right-wing public interest groups have filed lawsuits—allegedly on behalf of low-income children—seeking court orders establishing private-school voucher systems on the grounds that supposedly failing public schools violate state constitutional education guarantees.<sup>10</sup> The remedy requested is that state courts mandate taxpayer-

funded vouchers that parents can use to send their children to private and religious schools. But the prospects for such lawsuits seem limited, based on the separation of church and state doctrine in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Voucher proposals have fared no better on the legislative front—despite efforts in dozens of state legislatures. Over the past five years, vouchers and related proposals have come to dominate legislative discussions of school reform across the nation. In 1992 alone, some 37 states considered voucher legislation—up from a handful a few years earlier.<sup>11</sup> In 1994 and 1995, battles brewed in several states over the issue of providing taxpayer money for students to attend private schools, and substantial voucher efforts were expected in some 20 states.<sup>12</sup>

North Carolina hasn't escaped the fray. Republican legislators introduced three bills in the N.C. House in 1995 that would establish private-school choice programs, including vouchers, tuition grants, and tax credits. The only bill that advanced, a committee substitute for H.B. 954, would have provided refundable tax credits worth \$1,000 per child a year by 1997 to families with students in private or religious schools. (See Table 1 on p. 7.) Fortunately, the bill did not get out of the House Appropriations Committee.

Despite such efforts, Wisconsin is the only state with an existing voucher program—and that program is limited to a small number of students in the Milwaukee school system. Puerto Rico also has enacted a voucher plan, but the commonwealth's Supreme Court has scuttled that program on constitutional grounds.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Republican gains in the November 1994 elections have prompted many observers to predict a revival of voucher proposals in Congress as well as in many state legislatures.<sup>14</sup>

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## Existing Programs Provide Little Reason to Support Vouchers

**W**hat can we learn from existing voucher programs? Not much. Although the Wisconsin legislature approved the Milwaukee voucher plan five years ago, only about 800 students currently participate in the program.<sup>15</sup> Under the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, up to 1,500 low-income families are eligible to receive tuition grants worth about \$3,200. Students can use those grants to attend any private, non-religious school in the state.

Republican Governor Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin has proposed expanding the Milwaukee voucher program statewide, and the 1995 Wisconsin



Karen Tam

legislature broadened it to include religious schools as well.<sup>16</sup> But a federal court ruled in March 1995 that the Wisconsin voucher program could not apply to religious schools without violating the constitutional First Amendment guarantee of separation between church and state.<sup>17</sup> In addition, a recent survey of Wisconsin residents found that a solid majority (56 percent) opposed expanding the voucher program to religious schools.<sup>18</sup>

The Milwaukee voucher program, now in its fifth year, also has had trouble attracting and keeping students. Many of the voucher students have dropped out of the program—35 percent of the students left their chosen private schools after the 1991–92 school year, and another 30 percent left after the 1992–93 school year. Half of these students returned to Milwaukee public schools.<sup>19</sup>

Likewise, only half of the eligible private schools have accepted voucher students, even though participating schools receive the total voucher amount regardless of their actual tuition.<sup>20</sup> According to an independent evaluation by a University of Wisconsin researcher, none of the private schools currently accepting voucher students “can adequately teach emotionally disturbed (ED) students,” and none would be able “to teach large numbers of learning disabled (LD) students effectively.”<sup>21</sup>

Academic results for Milwaukee’s voucher students have been mixed. Second- and third-year test

scores dropped significantly in reading, while math scores in the first two years stayed the same and rose significantly in the third year. Meanwhile, students in Milwaukee *public* schools gained in reading scores in 1990–91 and 1991–92, but fell slightly in 1992–93. In math, they gained in 1990–91, stayed the same in 1991–92, and declined significantly in 1992–93. According to the evaluation, all of the private schools participating in the Milwaukee voucher program were lacking in effective governance structures, fiscal accountability, and educational accountability.<sup>22</sup>

*The Milwaukee Journal* has detailed allegations by parents and teachers at one voucher school that “students were being pushed ahead academically without being fully prepared, that some teachers treated students rudely, and that the principal dealt improperly with three students by touching them abusively or inappropriately.”<sup>23</sup> Parents also presented complaints about the school’s food, health policies, rest rooms, teacher handling of student behavior, and lack of parent involvement in the school, according to the newspaper. One voucher school shut down midway through the first year, forcing voucher students to enroll in different schools in the middle of the term.

Puerto Rico’s experience with vouchers has been no more promising, although for different reasons. The Puerto Rico legislature adopted the law

in the summer of 1993, and it quickly faced legal challenges. Sheila Simmons, a senior associate with the National Education Association, summarized the main argument against the law in testimony before the Puerto Rico legislature: "Using vouchers to channel funding to religious schools is unconstitutional. If unregulated, this aid could contribute to furthering the cause of a particular religious denomination. If regulated, that may constitute an excessive entanglement of church and state."<sup>24</sup>

The Puerto Rico voucher program provides \$1,500 grants that low-income families can use to send their children to any public or private school, including religious institutions. More than 2,000 students have chosen to attend private schools under the program, while more than 12,000 students transferred to public schools of their choice.<sup>25</sup>

Puerto Rico's Supreme Court allowed the voucher program to proceed while it was considering the case. But the court struck down portions of the law dealing with private-school vouchers in a decision issued Nov. 30, 1994. The court ruled that the commonwealth's constitution prohibits the use of public money for private schools. Under the decision, however, the public-school choice program remains in effect.<sup>26</sup>

### **Vouchers Do Not Provide Choice or Accountability**

**T**axpayers must understand that vouchers and tax credits do not provide parents with choice. Such options leave choice in the hands of private schools. Unlike our public schools, private schools select who will enter their doors. They can base their choices, for example, on athletic skills, intelligence, grade level achievement, past behavior, social status, ethnicity, and religion. Most private schools require entrance exams, particularly in high schools. They also require students to be achieving at grade level.

Moreover, private schools are not equipped to teach all types of students. According to a statistical profile published by the U.S. Department of Education in 1991, only 30 percent of private schools offered programs for students with disabilities, compared to 90 percent of public schools. Only 10 percent of private schools offered remedial reading, and only 43 percent offered remedial math.<sup>27</sup>

School choice programs in East Harlem, New York, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, have received much positive publicity. But these are not voucher programs. These are public school systems that let parents select which schools their children

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attend—and they must admit all students. With too many applicants at any schools in such open-enrollment programs, students are selected by lottery. These schools are publicly accountable and universally accessible.

Public-school choice is a laudable goal to strive for, as long as it serves all segments of the population. Choice is also something that all school systems can implement to some degree—whether it's in the form of easier transfer policies, magnet schools, or open enrollment programs. But it's erroneous to equate open enrollment and other kinds of public-school choice with vouchers, tax credits, and other private-school choice options.

It's also a myth that vouchers and tax credits would increase accountability in education. In fact, they would decrease scrutiny because private schools are not publicly accountable. Proponents of every voucher plan proposed in state legislatures or ballot initiatives across the country have been very clear on one point: They want public funding for private schools—without increased public scrutiny. That means these private schools could continue their current practices without having to account for their admissions and discipline policies; the nature or quality of their educational outcomes; funding sources and spending; and student outcomes. Plus, the public would be paying the tab.

### **Superior Performance by Private School Students a Myth**

**P**roponents of vouchers and tax credits often assert that private and parochial schools do a better job of educating students, but this contention is not supported by the facts. Private-school students score only modestly better than public-school students on standardized achievement tests—despite the ability of private schools to select their

students. And research shows that this advantage disappears when one takes into account the socioeconomic backgrounds, academic tracks, and course-taking patterns of students in both types of schools.

For example, the 1991 National Assessment of Education Progress report on math achievement for fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders shows that private-school students outperformed their public-school counterparts by only a few percentage points.<sup>28</sup> Yet private-school students should have performed dramatically better—given the advantages that they generally have in their socioeconomic status and the educational backgrounds of their parents.

David Berliner, an education professor at Arizona State University, suggests that critics have made public schools a scapegoat for the nation's social and economic problems. "Perhaps our public education is failing certain students and their families, but not others, and perhaps it is not even failing most of the students in the public schools," Berliner says. "Perhaps Americans have been lied to, because when nations have economic difficulties or go through social change, their leaders look for scapegoats, and the American school system is a handy one."<sup>29</sup>

The adoption of vouchers or tax credits also could create or magnify disparities between public and private schools because there is no guarantee that private schools would accept any poor and minority students. Under most private-school choice proposals, including the bills introduced in the N.C. legislature, private schools retain the right to choose which children will attend. Moreover,

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many low-income families still could not afford private schools under most voucher or tax credit proposals because the financial assistance often falls far below the tuition costs at private schools. Many private schools charge tuitions of \$5,000 a year or more—which is much more money than is proposed in any of the bills that would establish vouchers or tax credits in North Carolina. Although the tuition at religious schools tends to be lower, averaging about \$2,000 a year, that's still double the \$1,000 a year tax credit proposed in H.B. 954—the private-school choice legislation under most serious consideration in the 1995 N.C. General Assembly.<sup>30</sup>

Vouchers perhaps would allow some students to escape schools in crisis, but they would do nothing to provide quality education for all students. Schools losing their highest achieving students and most active parents would be drained not only of desperately needed funds but also of important human resources.

Linda Darling-Hammond, a leading African-American educator at Columbia University, notes that vouchers would be making a "tiny adjustment in the allocation of educational opportunity for a very small number of children and still condemning a large number of children to poorly funded, inadequate schools." She calls vouchers a "smoke screen to avoid tackling" the real equity issues in schools.<sup>31</sup>

### **Voucher Programs Would Drain Funds from Public Schools**

**V**ouchers and tax credits are costly. They not only would drain funds from the public school system, but they would make taxpayers foot the bill for educating students from affluent homes who already are enrolled in private schools. In that sense, vouchers would be welfare for the wealthy.

That's one of the key reasons why Citizens for Public Schools—a bipartisan coalition of 28 organizations representing educators, parents, business people, and citizens—released an open letter in June urging North Carolinians to oppose the tuition tax credit bill (H.B. 954). The letter, signed by Gov. Jim Hunt and former Gov. Jim Martin, stressed that the bill would cost taxpayers \$15 million in 1996 and \$77 million in 1997—just to provide tax credits to existing patrons of private schools. "If that much money is available in the budget, we believe it should be used to reduce class size, raise teachers' pay, or provide for other performance incentives for educators," the letter says.<sup>32</sup>

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Proponents have developed elaborate scenarios that attempt to show that vouchers or tax credits would not increase taxes or public spending on education. Some even claim that taxpayers actually would save money under such programs. But the reality would be different. Taxpayers would pay big bucks for vouchers or tax credits that subsidize parents with children in private schools. Furthermore, the political reality is that once such a program is in place, its beneficiaries would surely seek increases in the amount of the vouchers or tax credits.

House Republicans acknowledged as much when they tried to insert \$20 million in the state's 1995-96 expansion budget to pay for tax credits for private-school tuition. Although the House Appropriations Committee never approved the money, it somehow ended up in a House budget proposal. Republican leaders—calling it a mistake—stripped the money from the final House budget. But others weren't convinced that the item was just an oversight. "Ladies and gentlemen of the House, that \$20 million wasn't a mistake," said Rep. Toby Fitch (D-Wilson). "This whole ill-conceived, secretly written, class warfare, anti-education budget itself is a mistake."<sup>33</sup>

The 1993 California voucher proposal would have cost taxpayers over \$1 billion in subsidies to the parents of students already in private schools—without a single student transferring from public schools.<sup>34</sup> A 1991 Pennsylvania voucher bill had a price tag of more than \$300 million, just to subsidize existing private school parents.<sup>35</sup>

A headline in the *FTP-NEA Advocate*, published by the Florida Teaching Profession-National Education Association, says it all: "Voucher Legislation Would Virtually Bankrupt Public Schools."<sup>36</sup> According to the Florida group, "providing public funds to send children to private schools would take nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars (\$741,254,500) from a state school system that has been strapped for years and would give it to parents who already have children in private schools. The result would be a disastrous cutback in school personnel and increase in class sizes. None of the proponents of such plans have revealed how they would make up for this shortfall or how they would finance giving vouchers for even more students to attend private schools in Florida. Most voucher advocates oppose raising taxes."

### **Polls Show Limited Public Support for Vouchers**

**T**hus, it should come as no surprise that a number of nationwide surveys have found only limited public support for vouchers or tax credits. North Carolina voters, as well, have been cool to such proposals, as shown by an independent statewide survey conducted for the North Carolina Association of Educators and the N.C. Congress of Parents and Teachers in January 1995.<sup>37</sup> Among the survey respondents, more than 78 percent did not believe state funds should be used to support private schools for grades K-12. (For more information on surveys, see the related article, "What Polls Have Shown About Public Attitudes Toward School Choice," on p. 30.)

The North Carolinians surveyed, although opposed to giving money to private schools, supported a number of proposals for improving public schools. Survey respondents agreed that education could be improved by:

- Providing ongoing, continuous training for teachers (91 percent supporting);
- Giving more authority to teachers and parents at individual schools (89 percent);
- Providing more textbooks and instructional materials (75 percent);
- Improving technology in the classrooms (69 percent);
- Reducing class sizes (68 percent); and
- Granting effective control of public schools to local boards of education (67 percent).

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N.C. Association of Educators

**Cecil Banks speaking for the N.C. Association of Educators**

## Conclusion

**I**t's time to stop using vouchers or tax credits as a way to avoid discussing the real issue—which is providing quality education to the majority of students who attend public schools. The challenge is to create schools of excellence for all of our children,

including both the impoverished children in neglected urban and rural schools as well as those who are fortunate enough to live in wealthier communities. We must act on our belief that all children can learn, and we must make certain that they all have opportunities to do so. ☐☐

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—SHEILA SIMMONS,  
senior associate  
National Education Association

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Gerald C. Bracey, “The Second Bracey Report on The Condition of Public Education,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, October 1992, pp. 104–117.

<sup>2</sup> 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

<sup>3</sup> Center for the Preservation of Public Education, National Education Association (NEA), Washington, D.C.

<sup>4</sup> Andrea DiLorenzo, testimony on school choice for the National Education Association, presented to the Georgia Senate Education Committee, Oct. 28, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reads: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”

<sup>6</sup> Article V, Section 2(1) of the N.C. Constitution reads: “The power of taxation shall be exercised in a just and equitable manner, for public purposes only, and shall never be surrendered, suspended, or contracted away.”

<sup>7</sup> For more on California's ballot initiative on vouchers, see articles by Laura A. Locke in the *California Journal of Sacramento, Calif.*, including: “Proposition 174: Vouchers Lose Big,” December 1993, pp. 21–22; “The Voucher initia-

tive: Breakthrough or break-up for California Schools?" October 1993, pp. 8-14; and "The issue of choice: A voucher initiative goes before voters," June 1993, pp. 13-15.

<sup>8</sup>Edd Doerr and Albert J. Menendez, *Church Schools and Public Money: The Politics of Parochialism*, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, N.Y., 1991.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>Article IX of the North Carolina Constitution states: "The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at least nine months in every year, and wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students."

<sup>11</sup>National Association of Educators (NEA), internal memo prepared by the NEA Center for the Preservation of Education, 1992-95.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>*Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico [Teachers Association of Puerto Rico] v. Torres*. Also see Mark Walsh, "Court Strikes Down Puerto Rico's Private-School-Voucher Program," *Education Week*, Vol. XIV, No. 15 (Dec. 14, 1994), p. 17.

<sup>14</sup>Mark Walsh, "Prospects Improve for Voucher Proposals in Congress," *Education Week*, Vol. XIV, No. 28 (April 5, 1995), p. 25; and Laura Miller, "Revival of Private-School Voucher Plans Predicted," *Education Week*, Vol. XIV, No. 15 (Dec. 14, 1994), p. 14.

<sup>15</sup>For more on the Milwaukee voucher program, see Miller, Note 14 above, p. 17. Also see Ernest L. Boyer (ed.), *School Choice*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton, N.J., pp. 63-73.

<sup>16</sup>Laura Miller, "Wis. Vouchers For Religious Schools Urged," *Education Week*, Vol. XIV, No. 18 (Jan. 25, 1995), p. 1; also see Drew Lindsay, "Wisconsin, Ohio Back Vouchers for Religious Schools," *Education Week*, Vol. XIV, No. 40 (July 12, 1995), p. 1.

<sup>17</sup>*Miller v. Benson*, 878 F. Supp. 1209 (E.D. Wis. 1995). Also see Peter Schmidt, "Religious Schools Cannot Join Wis. Voucher Plan, Judge Rules," *Education Week*, Vol. XIV, No. 27 (March 29, 1995), p. 16.

<sup>18</sup>"Voucher Plan Opposed," *Education Week*, Vol. XIV, No. 32 (May 3, 1995), p. 18. The survey of 410 adults by Wisconsin Public Radio found that 56 percent opposed expanding the Milwaukee voucher program to religious schools, 38 percent favored the proposal, and 6 percent were undecided.

<sup>19</sup>John Witte, Andrea Bailey, and Christopher Thorn, *Second Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program*, Robert La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc., December 1992.

<sup>20</sup>John Witte, Andrea Bailey, and Christopher Thorn, *Third Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program*, Robert La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc., December 1993.

<sup>21</sup>Witte, et al., note 19 above.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>Neil Rosenberg, "Allegations Swirl at Urban Day," *The Milwaukee Journal*, June 17, 1993, p. B5.

<sup>24</sup>Sheila Simmons, testimony on school vouchers for the National Education Association, presented to the Education Committee of the Puerto Rico legislature, Aug. 28, 1993.

<sup>25</sup>Walsh, note 13 above, p. 17.

<sup>26</sup>*Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico [Teachers Association of Puerto Rico] v. Torres*. Also see Walsh, note 13 above, p. 17.

<sup>27</sup>U.S. Department of Education, *Private Schools in the United States: A Statistical Profile, With Comparisons to Public Schools*, National Center for Educational Statistics, Washington, D.C., February 1991.

<sup>28</sup>U.S. Department of Education, *The State of Mathematics Achievements: NAEP's 1990 Assessment of the Nation and the Trial Assessment of the States*, National Center for Educational Statistics, June 1991, Executive Summary and Table 2.6, pp. 6-7.

<sup>29</sup>David C. Berliner, "Education Reform in an Era of Disinformation," paper presented at a meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, San Antonio, Texas, 1992.

<sup>30</sup>The average tuition cost for religious schools in North Carolina is about \$2,000 a year, according to Joe Haas, executive director of the N.C. Christian School Association in Goldsboro (personal communication). Nationwide, average annual tuition costs in 1991 were \$2,595 for all private schools, \$5,527 for non-religious schools, \$1,776 for Catholic schools, and \$2,633 for other religious schools. See U.S. Department of Education, *The Digest of Education Statistics*, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C., 1994, Table 62, p. 72.

<sup>31</sup>Barbara Miner, "'Choice' is a Smokescreen: An Interview with Linda Darling-Hammond," in *False Choices* (A Special Edition of Rethinking Schools), Milwaukee, Wisc., 1992.

<sup>32</sup>Gov. Jim Hunt's office released the letter on June 19, 1995. In addition to Gov. Hunt and former Gov. Jim Martin, it was signed by Jay Robinson, chair of the State Board of Education; Bob Etheridge, State Superintendent of Public Schools; Howard Haworth, former chair of the State Board of Education; William R. Friday of the Kenan Charitable Trust; and Bill Lee, chairman emeritus of Duke Power Co.

<sup>33</sup>Jay Eubank, "GOP budget push angers Democrats," *News & Record*, Greensboro, N.C., July 1, 1995, pp. A1-2.

<sup>34</sup>California Teachers Association (CTA), *The School Vouchers Initiative: A Summary and Analysis for CTA Members of the 'Education, Choice, Scholarships Initiative Constitutional Amendments'*, Burlingame, Cal., 1993.

<sup>35</sup>The Public Education Coalition to Oppose Tuition Vouchers, "Voucher Fact Sheet," Harrisburg, Pa., 1991.

<sup>36</sup>Aaron Wallace, "Voucher Legislation Would Virtually Bankrupt Public Schools, Figures Show," *FTP-NEA Advocate*, Florida Teaching Profession-National Education Association, January 1995, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup>The telephone survey was conducted by an independent research firm, Simmons, Boyle & Associates of Chapel Hill, in January 1995. The firm polled a random sample of 400 registered voters in North Carolina, with a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percent.