

NEW JERSEY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Jan. 28, 2011

TO: **All members**

FROM: **Barbara Keshishian, NJEA President**
Vincent Giordano, NJEA Executive Director

RE: **NJEA's plan to stop vouchers**

On January 20, the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, by a 8-5 vote, approved S-1872, which would create New Jersey's first-ever private school voucher program.

Don't be fooled by its title (the so-called "Opportunity Scholarship Act"). This is a voucher bill, pure and simple. You may hear people claim that corporations are paying for it with donations. That is not true, because corporations will get a **dollar-for-dollar tax credit** from the state treasury for their donations, as an [NJEA chart](#) shows. It will cost corporations nothing, with the entire tab picked up by state taxpayers. The ugly truth is that the \$1 billion in education cuts in this year's state budget have already led to higher property taxes, and diverting another \$1 billion to private and religious schools will only drive them higher.

This legislation now moves to Assembly committees as A-2810, and if it ever becomes law – and Governor Christie has vowed to sign it – it will drain up to \$1 billion from the state treasury for diversion to private and religious schools, while public schools struggle under the impact of at least \$1 billion in state funding cuts. Please visit njea.org to get more information on this proposal.

NJEA is fighting back, with a massive media blitz and statewide lobbying effort, which we need each and every one of our members to join. We need you to enlist parents and others who care about public education in this struggle, which threatens the very future of public education in New Jersey. Our [radio spot](#) will be up and running statewide on Monday morning, and our [full-page ad](#) will be in every daily newspaper on Tuesday, Feb. 1. Print it out and share it with your colleagues. We will also have ads up on numerous websites, including Facebook and Google. Things are moving fast, and we are now looking at a critical Feb. 3 vote in the Assembly Commerce and Economic Development Committee. If it passes there, it heads to the Assembly Budget Committee, which is the final hurdle before it heads to the full Assembly and Senate.

This is a terrible piece of legislation, and I encourage you to read a [fact sheet](#) that explains just how bad it is. And, if you want to learn even more, read this terrific [article](#) by former State Senator and Assistant Education Commissioner Gordon MacInnes, which exposes this bill for what it is.

Please get informed, get involved, and get active in the fight to beat back this attack on public education and your future. We need every member in every local to join this fight. Thank you!