



National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

King Street Station I • 1800 Diagonal Road • Suite 320 • Alexandria, VA 22314

Tel: 703-519-3800 • Fax: 703-519-3808 • • www.nasdse.org

March 29, 2011

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), which represents the state directors of special education in the states, the Department of Defense Education Agency, the federal territories and the Freely Associated States, I strongly urge you to vote no on H.R. 471, the Scholarships for Opportunity Results (SOAR) Act, scheduled for a floor vote this week. This unnecessary legislation would expand the failed District of Columbia private school voucher program, funneling millions in new federal spending to private schools at taxpayer expense.

Additionally, NASDSE would like to state that we oppose voucher measures for all students – including those with disabilities. NASDSE believes that instead of sending federal money to private schools, it should be invested in the public schools. We also note that despite receiving public money, the participating private schools are not subject to all federal civil rights laws, and do not face the same legal and public accountability standards, including those in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that all public schools must meet. When students with disabilities enroll in private schools they lose their right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and the due process protections provided for them in IDEA. Finally, we also believe this program continues to raise problems under the First Amendment of the Constitution.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact NASDSE's Director of Government Relation, Nancy Reder at nancy.reder@nasdse.org or at 703-519-3800, Ext. 334.

Sincerely,

Bill East, Ed.D.
Executive Director