



Text File

Introduced: 6/24/2024

Bill No: 2024-0626, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is considering its Fiscal Year 2025 budget. In previous budget cycles, political forces have sought to pass significant increases to school voucher funding, including a Fiscal Year 2024 push to increase voucher funding by \$100 million. The legislature deadlocked over the introduction, and it took significant effort to eventually pass a voucher-free budget; **AND**,

WHEREAS, Pittsburgh Public Schools face increasingly strained finances beginning in early 2025, after the \$100.2 million the District received in federal American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds are expended; **AND**,

WHEREAS, Pittsburgh Public Schools have already encountered financial challenges in recent years due to, among other factors, steep reductions in commercial real estate tax revenue, declining enrollment, and significantly higher charter school tuition transfers than had previously been budgeted for; **AND**,

WHEREAS, Evidence shows school vouchers are frequently provided to families who already choose to attend non-public schools and often go to families earning more than \$200,000 a year; budgets are zero-sum documents; funding vouchers means there is less money to go to public schools that are already in desperate need of support and financial assistance; **AND**,

WHEREAS, Despite the looming fiscal cliff imperiling critical School District of Pittsburgh programs and services, recent activity in Harrisburg indicates the legislature has revived the fight over school vouchers, with the Pennsylvania Senate Education Committee passing a bill that would fund vouchers; **AND**,

WHEREAS, Statewide shortages of teachers, over-crowded classrooms, and deteriorating facilities can only be addressed through holistic, deep and long-term investments of billions of dollars into public school infrastructure; putting any money into vouchers for private schools with little financial oversight means less money for students,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh condemns the use of school voucher programming as harmful to the Pittsburgh Public Schools system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh calls upon the Pennsylvania Legislature to reject proposals adding school voucher funding to the Commonwealth's FY 2025 budget.