

Director of the Information Collection Clearance

ID: LFG-2018-0004

Division, U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue SW LBJ, Room 216-32

Washington, D.C. 20202

Sent via: Mail

January 29th, 2018

Re: DC School Choice Incentive Program Information Collection: Docket ID Number ED–2017– ICCD–0132

Dear Director of the Information Collection Clearance,

I am sending you this comment in opposition to the “DC School Choice Incentive Program” and this comment is being made pursuant to the Notice for the comment on the “DC School Choice Incentive Program” that was published in the Federal Register on December 21, 2017. Typically speaking, I am in opposition to the United States Department of Education giving private educational institutions vouchers. In the United States, private educational institutions are where a minority of American students attend and often those schools educate those who live in economically affluent households. The majority of students in the United States do attend public educational institutions and a lot of those students do not live in economically affluent households. I believe that the United States Department of Education needs to prioritize giving funds to the public educational institutions where the majority of students in the United States do attend and where too often those public schools are not given enough resources for the purpose as to educating their students.

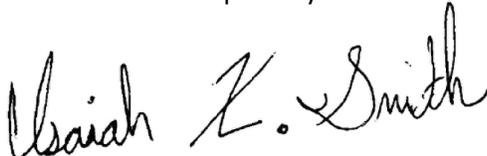
As the National Coalition for Public Education has stated as a comment to your office as for this docket number¹, I would like to state that as far as this docket number is concern with regard as to collecting data on this program, I do believe that the United States Department of Education must build upon its prior studies and evaluate the voucher program in a sound and thorough manner.² As they do believe, I also believe that collecting the proper data is a vital part of performing a thorough review and analysis of the DC voucher program. Especially since taxpayers often pay for these voucher programs, members of the public should have a right to know how the voucher program, if it has, led to any significant improvements in reading and math for students and if the voucher programs have at all benefited students with disabilities who also should have a right to get an education. With data collection by the United States Department of Education, I believe that members of the public also should have a right to know whether or not students that participated in the program are less likely to have access to programs for English language learners, learning support and special needs programs,

¹ NCPE-Comments-2018-DC-Voucher-Data-Collection-FINAL.pdf

² U.S. Dep’t of Ed., Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts After One Year (June 2017) (2017 U.S. Dep’t of Educ. Report); U.S. Dep’t of Ed., Evaluation of the DC Scholarship Program: Final Report (June 2010) (2010 U.S. Dep’t of Educ. Report); U.S. Dep’t of Ed., Evaluation of the DC Scholarship Program: Impact After 3 Years (Apr. 2009) (2009 U.S. Dep’t of Educ. Report); U.S. Dep’t of Ed., Evaluation of the DC Scholarship Program: Impact After 2 Years (June 2008) (2008 U.S. Dep’t of Educ. Report); U.S. Dep’t of Ed., Evaluation of the DC Scholarship Program: Impact After 1 Year (June 2007) (2007 U.S. Dep’t of Educ. Report).

tutors, counselors, cafeterias, and nurse's offices, in comparison to students that do not participate in the voucher program.

In conclusion, I do support the United States Department of Education collecting data that will evaluate the "DC School Choice Incentive Program." I believe that collecting data as to this issue is extremely necessary and is important, especially due to the fact that the "DC School Choice Incentive Program" is funded by the money of the taxpayer. Since this voucher program is funded by members of the public, I believe that members of the public, including organizations, should have a right to know how the money of the taxpayer is being spent and how their money is benefiting society through the "DC School Choice Incentive Program." So, when the United States Department of Education collects data as far as the "DC School Choice Incentive Program" is concerned, I am hoping that the United States Department of Education will make sure that it's data will list significant improvements, if there are any, in reading and math for students and that this should compare to student who do not participate in the voucher programs with respect as to their reading and math. The data that the United States Department of Education collects should also include whether or not the voucher has benefited students with disabilities, and should also make comparisons to students who do not participate in the voucher program, with respect to the voucher program's results for English language learners, learning support and special needs programs, tutors, counselors, cafeterias, and nurse's offices. Please help ensure that transparency occurs with respect as to this issue.


Respectfully,

Isaiah X. Smith³

³ www.isaiahxsmith.com