

# THE STAKES ARE HIGH.

Michigan must protect and strengthen its public schools and say **NO** to federal voucher scheme.

Michigan League for Public Policy | April 2026



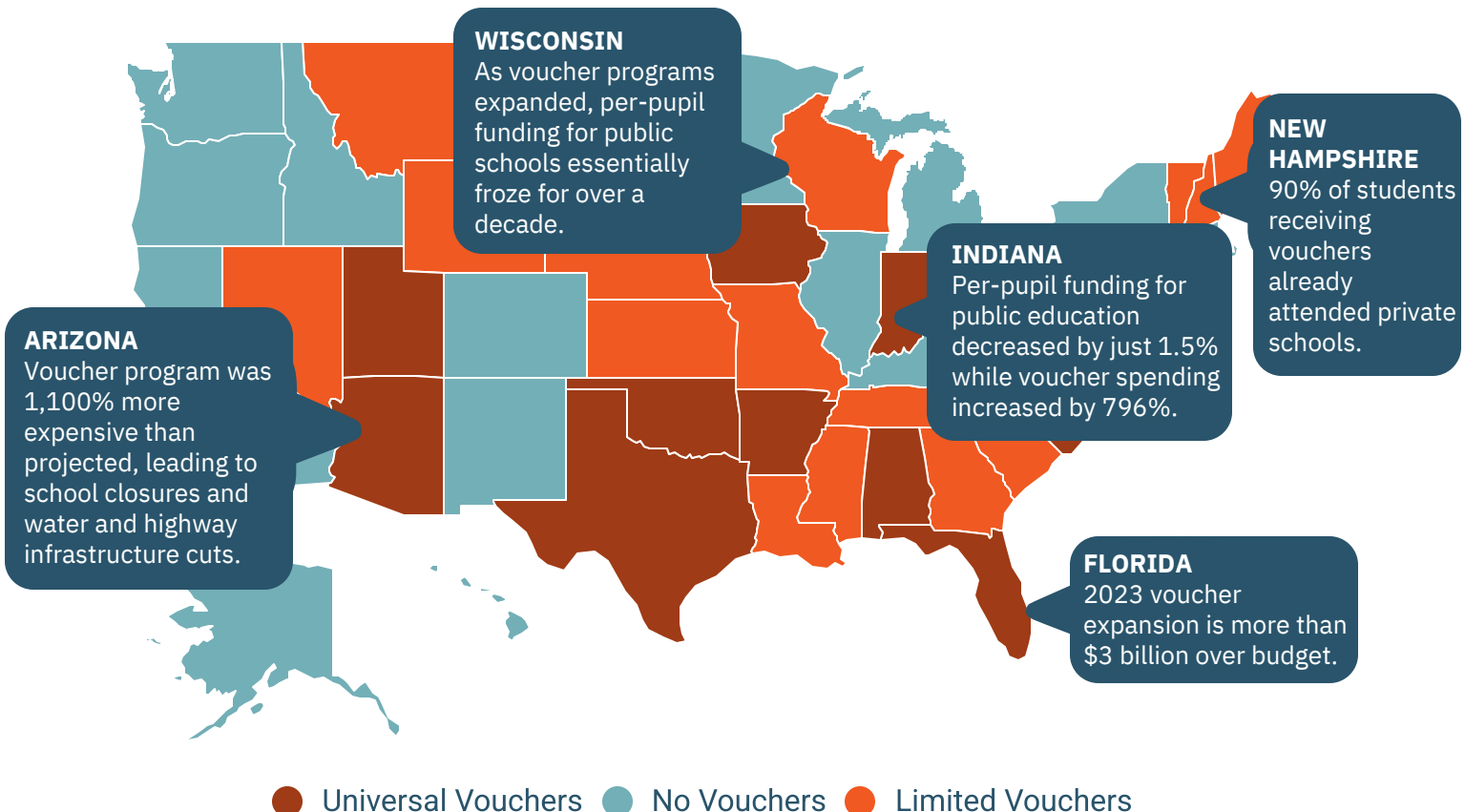
## Voucher scheme has long-term negative effects

Housed within The One Big Beautiful Bill, the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA) created **the first federal program to funnel taxpayer funds into private schools**. Structured as a tax credit scholarship program, the federal voucher scheme allows taxpayers to claim up to \$1,700 annually for donations made to qualifying Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs). The SGOs then distribute scholarships to families to spend on school tuition and other educational expenses. SGOs can keep up to 10% of taxpayer dollars (donations). The program does not have an expiration date or revenue cap, meaning that the government will be forced to spend unlimited amounts of taxpayer dollars on private and religious schools for an unlimited amount of time. **The Joint Committee on Taxation has estimated that, over 10 years, the program will add \$26 billion to the federal debt.**<sup>1</sup>

## Public schools and students lose out

Our public schools' funding is directly tied to student enrollment — the more students attending a school, the more state funding the school gets to educate those students. When enrollment in a district falls, so does the state funding. However, the costs to operate schools do not fall at an equal rate due to the fixed costs of keeping a school building open. Pulling students out of the public school system with vouchers destabilizes our public school systems by asking schools to provide the same services with less funding. States with voucher programs serve as a warning for Michigan.

## Negative outcomes from voucher states provide cautionary tales



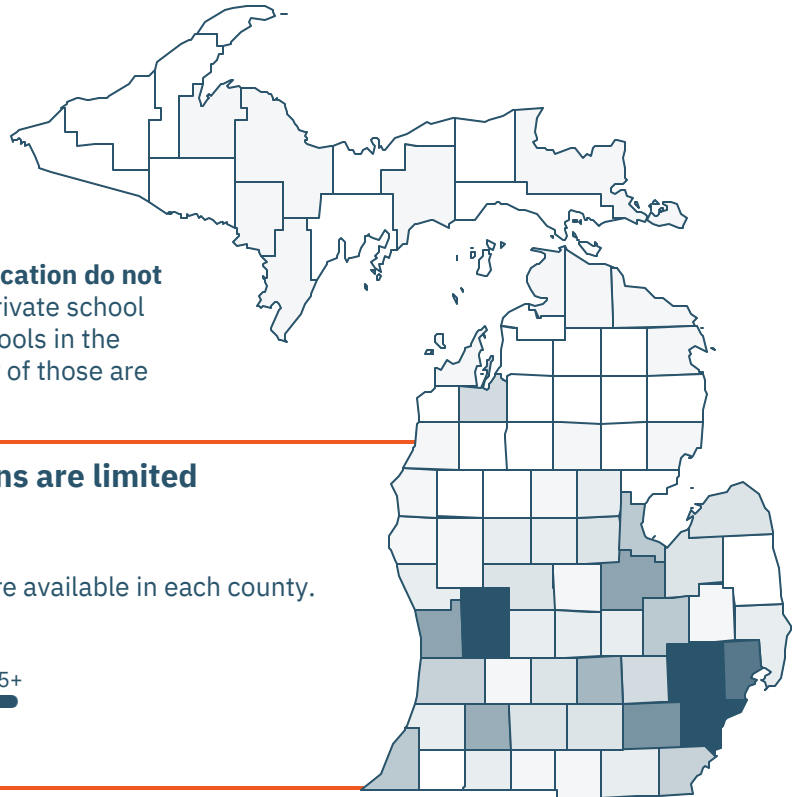
Sources: [National Coalition for Public Education](#), [Congressional Budget Office](#).

## A false choice

Proponents of school vouchers argue that families will have more choices when they are permitted to take dollars to any school of their choosing. However, research and stories from other states have proven that the majority of families who use vouchers are already enrolled in private schools, which ultimately results in subsidizing private education for those who are already able to afford it.<sup>2</sup>

### Plus, vouchers do not provide any more choices for most Michiganders.

- **Families with low incomes do not benefit from vouchers** because the dollar amount of the vouchers does not typically cover the entire cost of private school tuition.
- **Students with disabilities do not benefit from vouchers** because private schools are not required or equipped to provide special education services like public schools are. Private schools do not have to accept students with disabilities, and they are incentivized not to admit them due to the increased cost to educate students with disabilities.<sup>3</sup>
- **Most students in rural areas of the state do not benefit from vouchers** because they do not have access to a nearby school outside the public school system. In fact, 13 of Michigan's 83 counties, all in rural areas, do not have a school option outside the local public school district.
- **Students whose families do not seek a religious education do not benefit from vouchers** because the vast majority of private school options are religion-based. In fact, only 75 private schools in the entire state offer a secular education, and the majority of those are found in the southeast region of Michigan.<sup>4</sup>



## Racist origins and present-day segregation are embedded in voucher scheme

The Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision ruled that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional, but some Southern states searched for ways to resist school integration, and the idea of school vouchers was born. In the 1950s and 60s, private schools in the South opened specifically to enroll white students. Many of these schools "were supported directly or indirectly by public money, including tuition grants, tax credits, donated buildings, and even public school textbooks and teachers."<sup>5</sup>

**Vouchers continue to perpetuate racial segregation, as they were created to.** In North Carolina, a voucher state with robust data collection systems, private schools are disproportionately white (up to 30% more white than their county's demographics) and some public schools are disproportionately Black (22% more Black than the county's demographics).<sup>6</sup> Additionally, private schools receiving public funds through vouchers are able to deny admission to students who do not meet their criteria, leading to discrimination of students with disabilities and LGBTQ+ students.

### What can you do?

  **Contact Governor Whitmer and tell her to OPT-OUT of the voucher scheme.**

Reading a print copy of this report? Scan the code at the right to access an interactive report with sources and information about language.

