



## AAUW – Kentucky Policy Statement on Proposed Legislation in the Kentucky General Assembly:

OPPOSE: [HB 2](#) and [HB 208](#)

**February 1, 2024**

**[HB 2: Summary of Original Version](#)** Propose a new section of the Constitution of Kentucky to authorize the General Assembly to provide for a financial support for the education of students outside of the public school system; provide ballot language; submit to voters for ratification or rejection.

**[HB 208: Summary of Original Version](#)** Propose to amend Section 183 of the Constitution of Kentucky to authorize the General Assembly to provide for a portion of the educational costs of students outside of the public school system with parents of limited financial means; provide ballot language; submit to voters for ratification or rejection.

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The American Association of University Women’s (AAUW) mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. Since 1881, AAUW has supported a strong public education system that promotes gender fairness, equity, diversity, and inclusivity and addresses the barriers and implicit biases that hinder the advancement of women and girls, which ultimately hinder the advancement of everyone.

The proposed bills, [HB 2](#) and [HB 208](#), are designed to derail Kentucky's progress toward high-quality public education with adequate and equitable funding for and access to quality public education, including early childhood education, for all students. Repeated studies of voucher programs show that vouchers do not result in better student outcomes. Recent studies of the Louisiana and Ohio voucher programs revealed that students who used vouchers performed worse on standardized tests than their peers who were not in the voucher programs. Repeated studies of the voucher programs in Indiana, the District of Columbia, and Milwaukee revealed similar findings: Students offered vouchers do not perform better in reading and math than those not.

Students with disabilities are systematically excluded from voucher programs, as most voucher programs permit schools to discriminate in their admission policies. Private schools are not required to provide the same quality and quantity of services available to students with disabilities in public schools, including those mandated under each student’s individualized education plan.

Vouchers also fail rural students and families. The expense of running isolated religious or for-profit schools in less densely populated communities often outweighs any market-driven approach to education. For these communities, fully-funded public schools are critical since the local public schools may be rural students’ only option.

Vouchers fail students from middle-class and low-income families as well. Many voucher programs do not cap private school tuition, meaning that a voucher may not cover the actual cost of attending private schools in the state.

As such, AAUW Kentucky opposes using public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary education and charter schools that do not adhere to the same civil rights and accountability standards as other public schools require.