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Senate passes its voucher-heavy version of HB 21
ATPE opposes vouchers, urges House to make public schools priority

AUSTIN, Texas — Last night, the Senate passed its voucher-heavy version of House Bill (HB) 21, by a vote of 21-10. The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE), the state’s largest educator group, strongly opposes any type of voucher program that directs public funding away from public schools to private individuals or institutions.

“We’re disappointed they’ve voted to push vouchers under the guise of helping special needs children,” ATPE Executive Director Gary Godsey said. “This new version of HB 21 strips federal rights and protections for disabled children, funnels public dollars to unaccountable private schools and doesn’t adequately fund education for those who would qualify to use it.”

Testimony showed special education programs charging around \$15,000 to \$20,000 in tuition, while the voucher would only cover about \$9,000.

HB 21 will now go back to the House, where they can choose to accept the Senate’s version with vouchers or send the bill to a conference committee.

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The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators’ association in Texas with more than 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for 5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public education.