

"If the school's not doing its job, then we're supposed to take the money and give it to little Johnny's mama to go to any school that she wants to send him to, (to) make sure little Johnny grows up to be one of y'all one day."

- Senator Robert Ford

THE REAL FACTS ON SCHOOL CHOICE:

- **Struggling parents would have to pay private school tuition “up front” and then claim the tax credit when they file their taxes the next year.** *Struggling parents don't have a spare \$7,000-13,000 laying around to make up the difference between the tax credit and tuition costs at their school of choice.* Even if they found the “up-front” money and the 75 percent reimbursement covered their costs, poor people wouldn't benefit because they don't pay state income taxes. In fact, most South Carolinians don't pay enough income taxes to benefit.
- **Even if they found the money “up front,” parents would be eligible to claim a tax credit for 75% at most of what the state spends per student in the district where they live.** This varies widely from district to district, and it's not going to be enough to cover the costs of a decent school - or, in many parts of the state, any school. In many small counties, there's only one private school.
- **No poor student's parent can take a tax credit worth \$2,423 from the public school system (or even the \$3,650 from a failing school) and pay tuition at a private school.** Private school tuition with fees in our area run about \$9,300 at Mason Prep Elementary, \$15,000 at Porter Gaud, \$14,250 at Charleston Day, and \$20,000 at Ashley Hall.
- **Even after tuition is paid, parents would still have to pay for things** like uniforms, school fees and transportation, because public schools buses won't run to private schools.
- **There isn't enough scholarship money to make up the difference in a state where over 20% - 191,000 - of our children live in poverty. Scholarship “donors” would have to generate in excess of \$1 billion dollars to reach all students.** In some states that now have private school “choice,” poor parents are pressured to take out high interest, predatory loans to pay tuition a choice that puts them deeper into debt. Private School choice would open the door for a new level of predatory lending.
- **Private schools, many of which were founded in the 1950's through 1970's to maintain segregation in South Carolina, will still be able to pick and choose which children they accept and which children they reject.**
- **Every state dollar that follows a child to a private school is a dollar taken away from public schools that are already short of money.**
- **The people who would benefit from this legislation are some — but by no means all — of the people who already can afford to send their kids to private schools or who can almost afford it. These are, for the most part, not the parents whose children attend the worst schools in our state.**