

Youngstown League of Women Voters:
The January 28th resolution to promote legislation supporting
Public Education is based on the researched document
“Charters and Vouchers and Ohio’s Public Schools”
presented by Dr. Barbara Brothers, Chair of the Education Committee.

Abstract of “Charters and Vouchers and Ohio’s Public Schools”

Although education reform promoting charters and vouchers was originally cast as healthy competition meant to improve public schools and to give parents more choice in their children’s educations, such “reform” has actually resulted in a fragmented collection of poorly-performing charters and voucher schools that sap Ohio’s public resources, with over \$10 billion removed from school districts since the inception of the program. In FY 2017, of the 370 charter schools, 350 schools took their money from better performing districts; 7 from worse and 13 the same.

This problem is pervasive in our state, which presents one of the worst examples of “school choice” in action in our nation: currently 83% of the children in Ohio’s districts are affected, and, this year, more than \$310 million dollars will be spent on Charter and voucher (mainly religious) schools. Even though this is public funding, charters and voucher schools have little to no accountability and are exempt from the standards of staffing, instruction, governance, and evaluation set for Ohio’s Public Schools. Charter and voucher schools may also select students, resulting in narrow groups and/or segregation. In contrast, Public Schools must educate all children who live in their districts. A complicated, often opaque, system of sponsorship for charter schools demonstrates how firmly their creation is motivated by profit-making.

The lack of oversight and the healthy profits to be made by those creating and sponsoring “community schools,” as private schools are called in Ohio, not only have produced unacceptable outcomes, but have also crossed the line into fraud and corruption. ECOT (the online Electronic College of Tomorrow) offers a worst-case scenario, delivering very little for a theft of billions in Ohio public funds. Not only ECOT reaps huge financial benefits in Ohio; our research offers statistics, specific details, and a list of “characters” primarily interested in profiteering, not educating. National companies such as K12 Inc., for example, which operates Ohio’s Virtual Academy and on-line schools throughout the nation, has been found guilty of fraud in other states; its executives, based in Washington D.C., are paid over \$10 million.

The proven result of “choice” is to splinter and destabilize the Ohio Public Education system, and to put in its place a disconnected set of low performing options with no standards and little accountability, designed to enrich private school creators. Because these truths are fact-driven and not arguable, the League has taken a position for legislation that supports a Public Education system as set forth in the Ohio Constitution.