



SENATOBIA MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

104 McKie Street
Senatobia, MS 38668

Chris D. Fleming
Superintendent of Education

Jeff Underwood
Assistant Superintendent

To Representatives Trey Lamar, Lataisha Jackson, and Senator Neil Whaley,

The Board of Trustees of the Senatobia School District discussed House Bill 2 and Senate Bill 2002. As a board, we unanimously agree that we cannot support either bill and **ask that you oppose both bills.**

We are against the Choice provisions of the legislation because of the detrimental effects it will have on our school district and our community. The citizens of our community have worked very hard to support and build a school system that affords our children a high-quality education with outstanding extracurricular activities and opportunities. We also don't believe that children who are not enrolled as students in our district full time should be able to take advantage of the extracurriculars we offer. Every taxpayer in our school district pays ad valorem taxes that go towards helping educate the students of our district. If those from other school districts are allowed to attend our schools, **the money currently allotted for our students and facilities will be diluted tremendously.**

We do not believe it is in the best interest of our community to allow those from other areas who do not share our commitment and dedication to the school system and community to bring their children into our schools. For many residents of our school district, their home is their most valuable asset. Any real estate agent will tell you that the most important component of a home's value, in most situations, is the school district the property is zoned for. If school choice passes, there will be no incentive to live in our school district and home values here will greatly decrease. **We don't think our taxpayers want their homes to decrease in value by as much as 50% if school choice passes.**

We especially oppose allowing public tax dollars to be used for private school tuition and home school expenses. As a nation, we saw what happened when PPP money was given out with no accountability. Some of these bills plan to give out about \$7,000 per student without oversight and accountability because the private schools have publicly stated they will never take any accountability tests like those required of public schools. **In other states, people have used this money to buy large screen tv's, trips to Disney World, lingerie and many other inappropriate items.** (Google: Arizona Empowerment Scholarships Blasius ABC15)

We especially don't think our citizens want to be saddled with increasing taxes. Some estimate that these school choice bills could take \$500-\$800 million dollars out of the public schools. Unlike the private schools, we aren't allowed to simply pick and choose who we will educate; by law, we are required to educate all students that enroll in our schools. One example is that bus routes will not shorten, and money will still need to be allotted for diesel and upkeep of the buses. **With less money,**

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the school district will be forced to raise taxes on our citizens to cover these expenses (unfunded mandates).

As a state, Mississippi has made great strides in education. We do not need to dismantle what we have in place that is achieving the results we are seeing today, better known as the "Mississippi Miracle." Other states are now looking to Mississippi to learn what we have done so well to educate our children. The dedicated public educators of our state are to thank for their tremendous work and a large majority of them have clearly stated their opposition to these bills. We stand firm with our educators, students, and families. **Why in the world would we want to change something that is working so well and being copied by other states?**

As school board members of the Senatobia Municipal School District, we take oaths to do what is in the best interest of the stakeholders we serve. We will not shirk this obligation and that is why we are writing this letter.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

The Senatobia Municipal School District School Board

Brant Kairit, President

Cheryl Pegues, Secretary

Dwayne Casey

Tara Puckett

Kegan Armstrong

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