

## School Vouchers - 1999

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In 1981 WRJ adopted a resolution taking a clear position on public education and the separation of church and state. The section on tuition tax credits states "We are concerned that efforts to obtain government funds for non-public schools continue .

Recently those favoring such aid to private schools have succeeded in introducing in the Congress bills that would grant federal tax-credit for tuition fees paid to non-public elementary and secondary schools both secular and religious. We believe such bills are indirect public financing of non-public schools and could ultimately weaken the public school system (In Pursuit of Justice: Resolutions and Policy Statements, F-7).

Eighteen years later, tuition tax credits remain a contentious issue. In addition, legislation to establish publicly financed voucher systems, which would use tax revenues to pay tuition for children moved from public to private or parochial schools is regularly introduced in Congress but also has been introduced and is being implemented in cities and states throughout the country. Those who support vouchers claim tat they would improve the educational opportunities for poor and low income children. In reality they will deplete public school funding and divert tax dollars to private and religious institutions, they will weaken the public school system.

The Board of Directors of Women of Reform Judaism, The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods reaffirms its commitment to the separation of church and state and resolves to:

1. Support programs to strengthen the public schools.
2. Oppose any initiatives, such as tuition tax credits and vouchers, that would weaken the public schools.
3. Urge its affiliates to monitor educational proposals at the local and state level and work with likeminded coalitions to counter such efforts.