

Jay P. Greene's Blog

Psssst, WaPo, Your Bias Is Showing!

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Congress voted on Friday to reauthorize the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) and the *Washington Post's* headline could barely contain its exasperation:

“GOP House passes D.C. private schools voucher program. Again.”

Cute, right? But it gets better. (And by “better” I mean “worse.”)

Here's how the *WaPo* reporter characterized support for the program:

Local D.C. leaders have long been against the voucher program, arguing that it diverts money and students away from the public school system. But federal funding for the local schools system is tied to the legislation, and Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) and some council members have expressed support for the bill.

So unnamed “local D.C. leaders” oppose the voucher program, but the Democratic mayor and “some” council members support it. How many council members?

Bowser and eight council members wrote in a March letter to congressional leaders that a reauthorization of the act is “critical to the gains that the District's public education system has seen.”

Eight members supported the voucher program... Well how many members are on the D.C. city council? Thirteen, you say? So more than 60 percent of the council supports the voucher program and *WaPo* calls that “some.”

Throw in support from the current mayor and previous Democratic D.C. Mayors Anthony Williams, Adrian Fenty, and even Marion Barry (!), and *WaPo's* characterization that “local D.C. leaders have long been against the voucher program” looks even more ridiculous. Given that the majority of the city council and the majority of recent mayors support the OSP—to say nothing of the longstanding support from the WaPo editorial board—it would be equally if not more true to say that “local D.C. leaders have long supported the voucher program.” At the very least, *WaPo* could have actually named a few of the voucher opponents who are “local leaders” (the article cites only D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton) and written “local D.C. leaders have long been divided over the voucher program.”

WaPo, you can do better than that.