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Ted Kennedy helped kill the dream of an education for D.C.'s school children

August 31, 3:12 AM - Virginia Beach Conservative Examiner - Dave Gibson

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Next week, about 47,000 children will head back to school in the nation's capital. Unfortunately, they will be heading back to failing schools.

In March 2009, the U.S. Senate voted-down an amendment to the \$410 spending bill which would have allowed the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program to continue through the 2009-10 school year. The program was approved by the then Republican-controlled Congress in 2003.

The Senate voted 58-39 along party lines, to kill the amendment introduced by Sen. John Ensign (R-NV). "Parents are lined up to give their children a better future through the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship. And why not? It's a better education in a safe environment. For policymakers, it should have been just as simple because it's also less expensive," said Ensign.

The program allowed families making under \$22,736 a year to receive vouchers worth up to \$7,500 per student, for a private education.

Faced with angry parents, and accusations of hypocrisy, as his own children attend the exclusive Sidwell Friends private school, President Obama decided to allow the 1,715 children currently enrolled in the voucher program to continue attending private school until they finish high school.

Of course, the program is no longer available to other students, and the voucher plan will simply be ended through attrition, ignoring the desperate pleas from D.C.'s parents who had hoped their children could also receive a quality education.

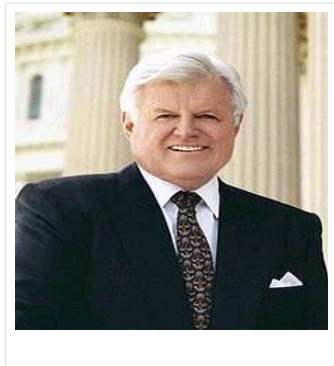
With the end of the program, unfortunately comes the end to the only chance that most of these families will have of breaking the cycle of poverty.

Those who oppose school vouchers, often claim that they do so because funding the program will divert needed funds from public schools. However, they ignore the fact that we continues to throw good money after bad, as our public schools continue to turn-out young men and women who are woefully unprepared for the ever competitive and shrinking job market.

Far too often, most of our elected representatives on the left, choose to keep supporting public schools as well as the teachers' unions who financially support their campaigns.

Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA), was one of those who opposed vouchers, and who also enjoyed very strong support from teachers' unions.

Shortly after the Senate ended the program, Melissa Wagoner, a spokeswoman for Sen. Kennedy, told reporters: "Sen. Kennedy strongly opposed the creation of the program, which takes funds from very needy public schools to send students to unaccountable private schools "



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