



A Union of Professionals

## WHAT DO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THINK ABOUT VOUCHERS?

*Support for vouchers is weak and getting weaker. The public is highly supportive of doing what it takes to strengthen public schools:*

- By a large majority, Americans continue to oppose using public funds to pay for students to attend private schools. According to the 2005 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll, 57 percent of the public opposes vouchers; support for vouchers registered at 38 percent in 2005. Opposition to vouchers has risen slightly since 2004, when the same question drew 54 percent opposition and 42 percent support.
- In response to a question on the 2003 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll about implementation of a voucher program in their state following the most recent Supreme Court decision, 56 percent of respondents said they would oppose their state offering vouchers to students to attend private school with public funds.
- The American public consistently favors improving and strengthening existing public schools rather than finding an alternative to the current system. When asked whether they favored “reforming the existing system” or “finding an alternative system” to improve public education, 66 percent of respondents chose reform and only 26 percent reported preferring an alternative.

Source: The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, by Lowell C. Rose and Alex M. Gallup. Phi Delta Kappan, September 2005  
The 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, by Lowell C. Rose and Alex M. Gallup. Phi Delta Kappan, September 2004  
The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, by Lowell C. Rose and Alex M. Gallup. Phi Delta Kappan, September 2003

*Other polls have had similar findings:*

### **National School Boards Association/Zogby International Poll (2002)**

- Among voters in the District of Columbia, 76 percent oppose vouchers if it would mean less money for public schools.
- Opposition was even higher among African American voters in D.C., 85 percent of whom said they opposed vouchers.
- If vouchers were to be enacted, 80 percent of voters who responded said that schools that received vouchers should be held to the same standards of accountability as public schools.

### **Associated Press (2002)**

- Sixty percent of the American public opposed a school voucher program if it would mean less money for public schools.
- 56 percent of the public thought that schools accepting vouchers should have to accept all students who apply.

- Only 45 percent of those polled said they would send their child to a private school if a voucher were available.

**Texas State Teacher’s Association (2002)**

- In 2002, only 34 percent of Texans believed that vouchers would help public education. Meanwhile, 64 percent supported a raise in teacher pay even if it meant a tax increase.
- 78 percent of Texas residents gave their child’s public school a grade of ‘A’ or ‘B’.

**National School Boards Association/Zogby International Poll (2001)**

- 89 percent of people reported believing that voucher schools should test and publicly report scores in the same manner public schools do.
- 89 percent of people also believed that voucher schools must be held to the same academic standards as public schools.
- 80 percent of the population said that voucher schools should admit all who apply.
- Only 57 percent of those who said they support vouchers said they would do so even if it meant money would be taken away from public schools.

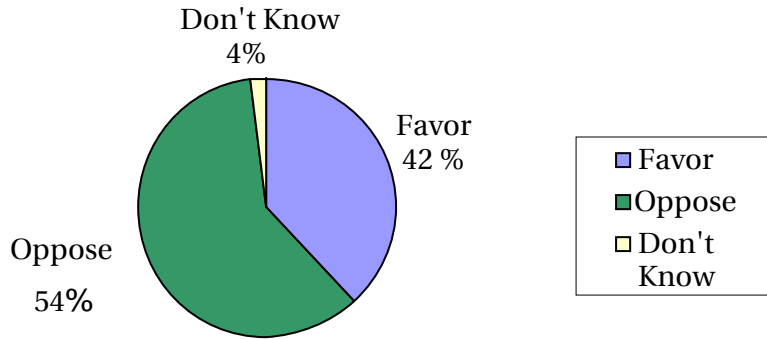
***The American people consistently have rejected vouchers when put to a vote:***

In the most recent vote, California voters overwhelmingly voted against a voucher measure put on a 2000 ballot. According to a Los Angeles Times exit poll, 71 percent of voters, including 68 percent of black voters and 77 percent of Latino voters, said “No” to vouchers.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Maryland	1972	45%	55%
Michigan	1978	26%	74%
Colorado	1992	33%	67%
California	1993	30%	70%
Washington	1996	36%	64%
Michigan	2000	31%	69%
California	2000	29%	71%

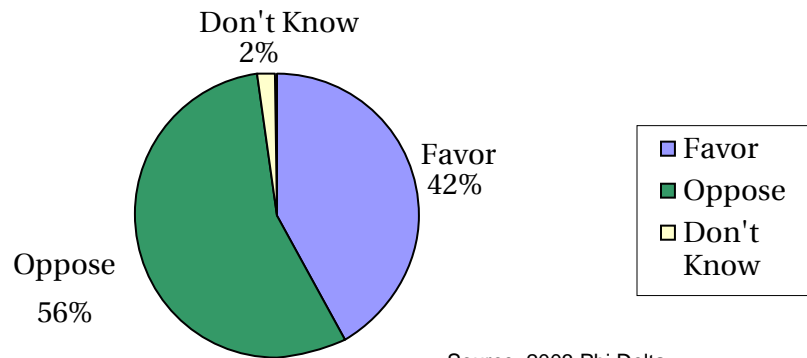
**Source: The National Education Association**

**Do you favor or oppose allowing students and parents to choose private schools at public expense?**



Source: 2004 Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup Poll

**Do you favor or oppose the voucher program the Supreme Court says is permissible under the U.S. Constitution?**



Source: 2003 Phi Delta Kappan/Gallup Poll