



Senate tosses private school scholarship legislation, leaving ‘voucher’ opponents optimistic

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A legislative proposal to use public funds to subsidize private school tuition and other personal educational costs was sidelined Friday, raising the possibility that the push for what opponents label as “vouchers” is dead for this year.

Senate Bill 173 was intended to create education scholarship accounts through which parents could have used state money otherwise destined for their public school. It [died in a close vote on the Senate floor](#) in early March, but some Senators tried to resurrect it using the committee process.

They [attached the language from the dead bill to still-viable legislation](#) from the other chamber. House Bill 68 had previously focused only on slight changes to a different type of pre-existing private school scholarship program, one based on tax credits rather than on direct state payments.

Then, on Friday, the penultimate day of the 2019 legislative session, the Senate Rules Committee reversed course, removing the SB 173 language.

Public school advocates had mounted a pressure campaign against SB 173, urging teachers, parents and taxpayers to call their lawmakers about it.

Margaret Ciccarelli, policy chief for the state's largest teacher advocacy organization, the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, was guarded but optimistic that the language would not resurface before the legislative session ends Tuesday.

“It appears that this bill is dead for this session,” she said.

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