

# D.C. VOUCHER PROGRAM CUT

Beginning in 2004, the United States Congress funded a voucher program in the District of Columbia. Unfortunately, that program was not renewed by the current Congress and will come to an end following the 2009-2010 school year.

Apparently, we have money these days for every conceivable government program and corporate bailout, but we come up short in providing scholarship money to the indigent in the nation's capital. What is really disturbing about this is the fact that those who claim to defend the interests of the poor are the very ones that stood in their way. That's because their real allegiance is to the teachers unions who funnel money to them; not the poor.

President Obama's children attend the Sidwell Friends School, the same elite school that Chelsea Clinton once attended. Some of the students there come from impoverished families; they are only able to do so because of the voucher program. Because of Congress' failure to renew the voucher program, these kids will be kicked out of the elite schools and forced back into the depleted public schools.

Of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, the District is dead last in academic achievement. Barack and Michelle Obama, like most of the millionaires in the Congress who have school-age children, are very well aware of this. That is why they spend the money to send their children to private or parochial schools.

Even Secretary of Education Arne Duncan—who is personally opposed to vouchers—believes that the students that are currently enrolled in the voucher program should be allowed to stay there. He said, “I don't think it makes sense to take kids out of school where they're happy and safe and satisfied and learning. I think those kids need to stay in their

schools.” But Secretary Duncan lost, and those kids are going to be thrown out.

Where are the champions of the pro-choice crowd when poor parents are denied the right to choose what school their children can attend? This type of choice works wonders, and it does so without hurting anyone. Unfortunately, our current Congress doesn’t see it that way.