

PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY RELEASES BIASED REPORT ON SCHOOL VOUCHERS

People for the American Way has released a report on school vouchers that concludes that the Cleveland voucher program is a failure. Responding to the report is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“The report by People for the American Way, ‘Empty Promises: A Closer Look at the Cleveland Voucher Program,’ is twice flawed: it distorts the data and is ideologically driven. Indeed, the latter explains the former.

“To be specific, the report makes the astounding claim that ‘studies fail to demonstrate significant educational improvement for students who transfer to voucher schools.’ This conclusion is not only contrary to the assessment rendered by virtually every scholar who has examined the data on school choice (in Cleveland, Milwaukee and other cities), it distorts the work of Kim Metcalf of the Indiana Center for Evaluation at Indiana University; professor Metcalf is cited in the endnotes as the author responsible for this conclusion.

“Speaking of the results of the Cleveland voucher program, Metcalf has said that ‘the results [after two years] indicate that scholarship students in existing private schools had significantly higher test scores than public school students in language (45.0 versus 40.0) and science (40.0 versus 36.0).’ He added that while on other scores there was no significant difference, it was fair to conclude that ‘The scholarship program effectively serves the population of families and children for which it was intended and developed’ (namely those in the low-income bracket).

“But what is really bothering People for the American Way is

the fact that most of the families in the Cleveland voucher program have opted for Catholic schools. The report admits this saying that these programs 'threaten students' religious liberty and violate the separation of church and state.' Nonsense to be sure, but revealing nonetheless: the driving force behind the report is the desire to deny the poor a Catholic education. Sadly, this is consistent with the group's founding goals."