

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, our public schools need more resources, not less. This bill diverts funds that could be used for public schools into private school vouchers. Instead of helping public schools, the bill helps the privileged few who can both win the lottery and have the resources to pay the difference between the voucher and the cost of an education. That cost of education is usually more than just the tuition charged. So the recipient not only has to cover the whole tuition but also has to get access to a charity or a religious institution that would subsidize the cost of the education. Many who win the voucher lottery find that they can't even use the voucher because they can't afford the remaining cost of education.

And so we've heard a lot about the so-called choice of a private school education. That choice is only available to those who win the voucher lottery. So it's not a choice. It's a chance. With that same logic we can solve the Social Security problem by just selling Lotto tickets. Those who win the Lotto will be much better off. But, of course, few will win. Likewise, 90 percent of those who seek a voucher will lose the voucher lottery, and so they don't have a choice. Even though they have chosen the lottery, they don't have the choice. They will remain in public schools. And those schools will be worse because the money has been diverted.

The evidence now shows that even those who win the lottery may not be better off. Studies of the D.C. voucher program reveal that there's virtually no improvement in education. Furthermore, those the program was supposed to help are the ones that are benefiting. Those in failing schools represent a small portion of those who use vouchers. Many of those who use vouchers were already in private schools. And many more would have gone to private schools anyway.

The schools that these children attend with vouchers are not covered by the same educational accountability standards as public schools, and the students and employees are not covered by the same civil rights protections. So we should defeat this bill and channel these funds into the public schools in Washington, D.C.