

RESOLUTION

No. 2025 / 01 / 01
Out of Order

To the HONORABLE Mark DeWitte, Chairman, and Members of the Hawkins County Board of Commissioners in Regular Session, met this 27nd day of January 2025.

**RESOLUTION IN REF: HAWKINS COUNTY OPPOSES GOVERNORS LEE'S
"EDUCATION FREEDOM ACT"**

WHEREAS the Hawkins County Commission is the funding body for our local public school system; and

WHEREAS the Constitution of the State of Tennessee requires that the Tennessee General Assembly "provide for the maintenance, support, and eligibility standards of a system of free public schools," with no mention of the maintenance or support of private schools; and

WHEREAS Hawkins County schools provide education to all students regardless of background, need, or ability; and

WHEREAS Hawkins County schools provide an array of specialized programs of study, including special education services and career and technical education designed to meet the needs of the local workforce, which are invaluable for meeting both individual needs and the requirement by the Tennessee State Constitution to provide free a public education; and

WHEREAS many Hawkins County students are economically disadvantaged and lack the ability to overcome the multiple barriers of accessing private education beyond basic tuition cost, including but not limited to fees, uniform requirements, meals, and transportation; and

WHEREAS vouchers eliminate public accountability by funneling public funds to private institutions that do not face state-approved academic standards, do not make budgets public, do not adhere to open meetings and records laws, do not publicly report on student achievement, and do not face the public accountability requirements in major federal laws, including special education; and

WHEREAS vouchers give more choice to private schools, not students and parents, as they can deny admission for any reason or no reason at all, allowing public funds to be used to potentially discriminate against disadvantaged or disabled students; and

WHEREAS this lack of accountability is fiscally irresponsible and inherently unfair to Hawkins County teachers, administrators, and other educational staff who dedicate their lives and work tirelessly to meet outlandish and unattainable accountability standards imposed upon them by the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS Hawkins County public school teachers and administrators have begged the Governor and state legislators for more resources and removal of regulations that create barriers they face in educating their students, but instead are being met with a bill that is attempting to abandon public school teachers, administrators, staff, and students; and

WHEREAS Hawkins County is committed to maintaining local control of the Hawkins County Public School system to ensure it reflects the needs and values of our community; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hawkins County Commission expresses its opposition to the Governor's "Education Freedom Act" as well as any other voucher legislation due to the detrimental impacts these programs will have on our students, schools, and community. Additionally, the Hawkins County Commission expresses its opposition to the Governor's attempt to attach this legislation to Hurricane Helene relief funds in an effort to strongarm legislators to vote for the "Education Freedom Act".

Introduced By Esq. Josh Gilliam, Robbie Palmer, John Gibson

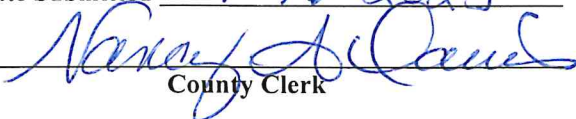
ACTION: **AYE** **NAY** **PASS**

Seconded By Esq. _____

Roll Call _____ _____ _____

Date Submitted 1-16-2025

Voice Vote _____ _____ _____



County Clerk

Absent _____ _____ _____

COMMITTEE ACTION

By: _____

Chairman _____

Mayor _____

MAYOR'S ACTION: **Approved** _____ **Veto** _____