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Pritzker Goes After Private Schooling

For years, substandard Illinois government schools have failed students. In 2017, a program was set up to help low-income students escape these schools. The "Invest in Kids Act," gave parents and their disadvantaged children school choice. The students were given a scholarship paid by donors who received a tax credit. A 75-cent tax credit was given for every dollar donated. The neediest students were prioritized for acceptance. This program was to last until January 1, 2024 before being restarted, but Governor Pritzker decided to kowtow to the teacher unions and dismantle the program. He called this a business "tax loophole."

It is not a business tax loophole, as it allows underprivileged families to choose whatever school is best for their children. Many of these private schools have been open since August despite the general pandemic lockdown, and no coronavirus casualties have been recorded. In-person learning should be expanded not limited, but this seems to be too much "choice" for the governor and those in education who are trying to keep the children of Illinois hostage.

By limiting scholarships, the governor will then redirect several million dollars to lower achieving government schools. Even 3 years ago, Pritzker stated at a news conference at the Illinois Education Association's Professional Development Center in Springfield: "I'm opposed to that \$75 million tax credit, that school voucher system that [Rauner] created, and we should as soon as possible do away with it."

The \$75 million in tax credits has yielded \$100 million in private school scholarships for low-income Illinois students. Under Pritzker's 2020 budget, eliminating \$25 million of the tax credits (worth \$37.5 million in scholarships) for needy families and students allows more millions to go to inferior public schools. The governor's children attend private schools. If public schools are so good, why do 40 percent of Chicago teachers send their own children to private schools? When it comes to their own children, Chicago teachers know what to do.