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The Honorable Bruce W. Bannister, Chairman
Ways and Means Revenue Policy Subcommittee of the South Carolina House of
Representatives
P.O. Box 11867
Columbia, SC 29211-01867

May 2, 2023

Re: Bill S 285 (Session 125) as considered in subcommittee on May 3, 2023

Dear Representative Bannister and committee members:

On behalf of the membership of The South Carolina Education Association ("The SCEA") I wish to convey our opposition to South Carolina Senate Bill 285, aka the "Academic Choice in Education fund" as filed in 125th Session of the General Assembly.

Our opposition of the bill is based upon the following factors:

1. Over 94% of our state's students attend a public school. Any money directly or indirectly taken away from our public education system hurts our children, teachers, administration, and all other school personnel. It will force our educators to do more with less, all the while endeavoring to provide a high-quality education to every child who is enrolled.
2. If passed in its current form, S 285 will disproportionately have a negative impact on rural school districts in our state who, in many instances, already lack funding.
3. S 285 is reckless with should-be public funds. As stated in section 12-6-3855, paragraph 4, section C, potential state tax revenue is funneled into private schools with no oversight from any state agency. This approach welcomes the potential for abuse and misuse.

S 285 will hurt public education in our state. It will widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Lastly, S 285 provides no mechanism to prove the loss in potential revenue to our public education system was better spent in the private system.

Considering all factors, we ask you to oppose S 285.

Please contact my office for additional assistance if you have questions or need additional clarification.

With kind regards,

Sherry L. East, President

Dena Crews, Vice President
Affiliated with the National Education Association

Todd Jaeck, Executive Director

Sherry L East

Sherry East, President, The South Carolina Education Association