

NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM ISSUE PAPER:

NEBRASKA UNION TEACHERS GORGE ON TAX \$\$ BUT OPPOSE SCHOOL CHOICE FOR KIDS.

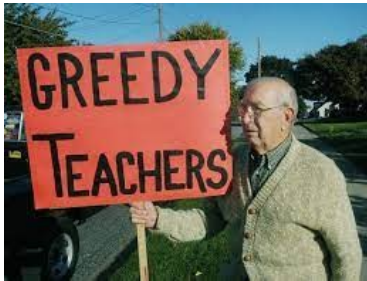
BACKGROUND. The state teachers' union, the Nebraska State Education Association, together with its public school allies, has launched a statewide petition drive designed to nullify the law promulgated by **LB 753**, which allows contributions from private individuals and corporations to provide opportunity scholarships for underprivileged students to opt out of failing public schools and enroll in private and parochial schools. One of the main teacher union attacks against this legislation is that it supposedly takes money away from public schools. This accusation is laughably ridiculous, if one examines the huge amount of taxpayer funding for NE public schools and teachers provided by the 2023 legislative session. These scholarships drain no dollars from state aid to education.

EDUCATION FUTURE FUND. This fund transfers \$1 billion in FY 2023-2024 from the General Fund to the NE Dept. of Education. \$250 million added every fiscal year. This act fully funds state aid to schools under the Tax Equity & Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA). It pays for special education supplemental aid. It funds foundation aid for every school district. It hikes funding for each school district to guarantee direct property tax relief, a dollar for dollar replacement of property taxes. This law pays for a grant program to financially entice teachers to remain in their classrooms and not seek alternative employment. Dollars to provide students with teacher mentors who will offer continual support and encouragement.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR SEVERAL CATEGORIES. In the following fiscal years, state aid to special education will increase by 4.4%, \$2.34 million more for high ability learner programs, and state aid to public schools up 17.2%. The Early Childhood grant program will receive \$3.6 million, the early childhood endowment \$7.5 million. Thousands more to expand public school lunch and breakfast programs. Thousands more for adult education. \$470,000 for the Learning Community. \$750,000 for high school equivalency assistance. The state Dept. of Education will gain a 4.9% increase in its FY 2024 budget. In FY 2024-2025, \$5 million for Education Teach in Nebraska Today to financially attract teaching candidates. \$13 million in aid to educational service units. \$400,000 for nurturing healthy behaviors in schools. \$1.5 million for the education textbook loan program. Summer food services for students, \$90,000. \$100,000 for Step Up to Quality Child Care Scholarships (but private scholarships opposed by the NSEA). \$49,289 for educational vocational rehabilitation.

AND MORE APPROPRIATIONS. \$5.2 million in cash funds to the Education Dept. in FYs 2023-2025 for career and technical education. Revolving funds are transactions whereby one state agency provides goods or services to another agency. The expenditure here for education is \$2.1 million, the 5th highest in this category. **LB 583** inserted \$1,500 per student foundational aid into the state aid formula, expanding state funding for special education by filling in the gap between current federal and state aid and 80% of school district expenditures for special ed.

STILL MORE APPROPRIATIONS. Through **LB 705**, distance education initiatives funded through FY 2023-2024 from the NE Education Improvement Fund, then funded for the next 5 fiscal years by transfers from lottery revenues. For the Extraordinary Increase in Special Education Expenditures Fund, \$2.5 million. From the Career Readiness and Dual Credit Education Grant established and administered by the Coordinating Comm. for Secondary Education, grants given



teachers enrolled in teacher ed classes leading to qualification to teach dual-credit classes and career and technical education courses. Expanded Learning Opportunity Grants will receive 1% of funds from the NE Education Improvement Fund for FY 2023-2024. In future years, 1.5% of funds for this grant from lottery revenue transfers. 8% of this fund used for training teachers in safe behavior management strategies, tactics, and de-escalation procedures. Creation of the NE Teacher Recruitment & Retention Act, this fund objective to incentivize recruitment and retention of new teachers and teachers with sorely needed certification in specific areas. New teachers would receive \$2,500 grants at the beginning of teaching years 2, 4, and 6. Teachers with specific area certification

would receive a one-time grant of \$5,000. The NE Paraprofessional to Teacher Program would increase the number of NE teachers from paraprofessional ranks. They would receive a grant up to \$3,000 per semester to fund their expenses for tuition, books, and other materials required to obtain a teaching certificate. Meanwhile, NE teachers no longer must pass a basic skills test in order to obtain a teaching certificate!

TAKE ACTION NOW. It is transparently obvious that NE legislators have bestowed millions in additional appropriations for public school teachers and public education this session. Yet, the teachers' union apparently is not content with all this largesse. It distorts the financial effects of **LB 753**. It seeks to prohibit the families of underprivileged children from taking advantage of private contributions that would allow their kids to transfer to private and parochial schools that will enhance their learning experience and academic achievement. Do not allow the insatiable greed of the NE teachers' union to deprive deserving NE children of the opportunity to take advantage of the private scholarships offered by **LB 753**. Parents of children in schools and others in the community must stand up for education principles. Join with NTF in the **Keep Kids First** effort to quash the teachers' union petition. Email netaxpayers@gmail.com for details.



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