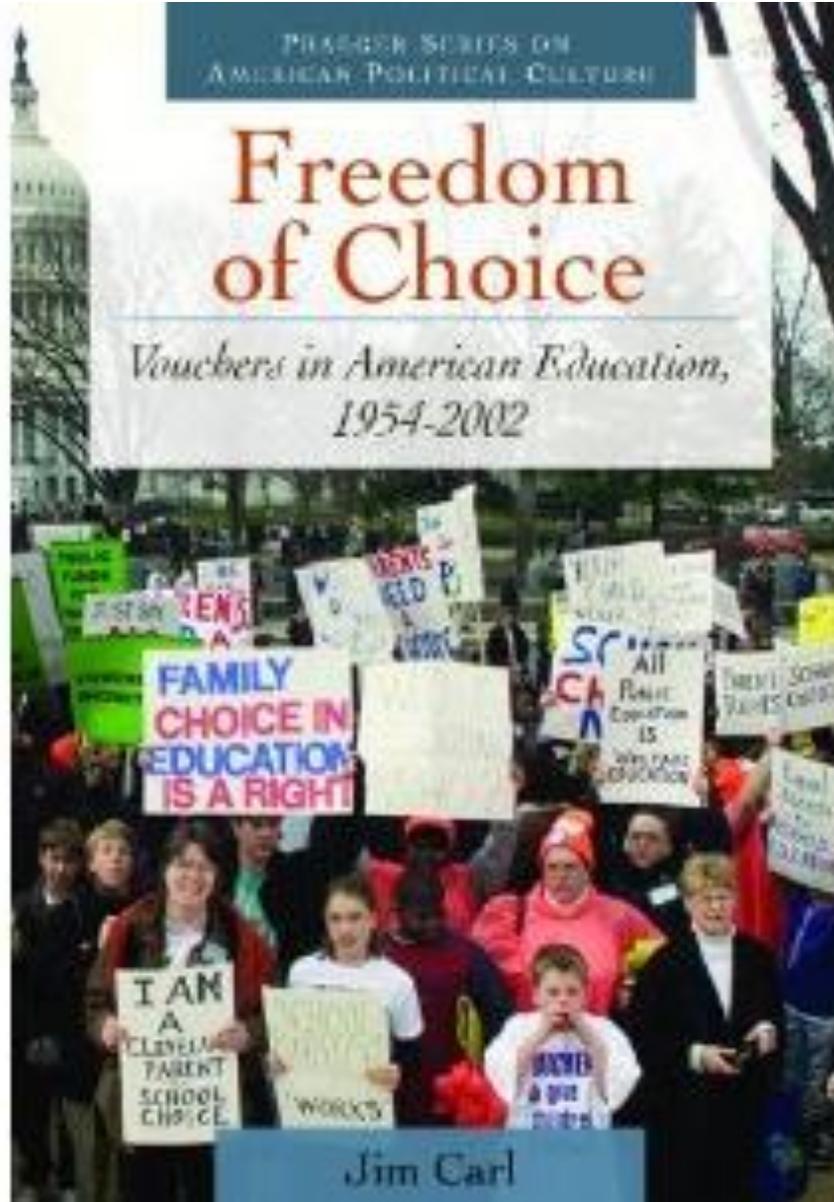


# School Vouchers and American Freedom

The non-educational aims  
of school voucher supporters.



Jim Carl, *Vouchers in American Education*, Westport, CN: Praeger, 2011.



# School Vouchers Defined

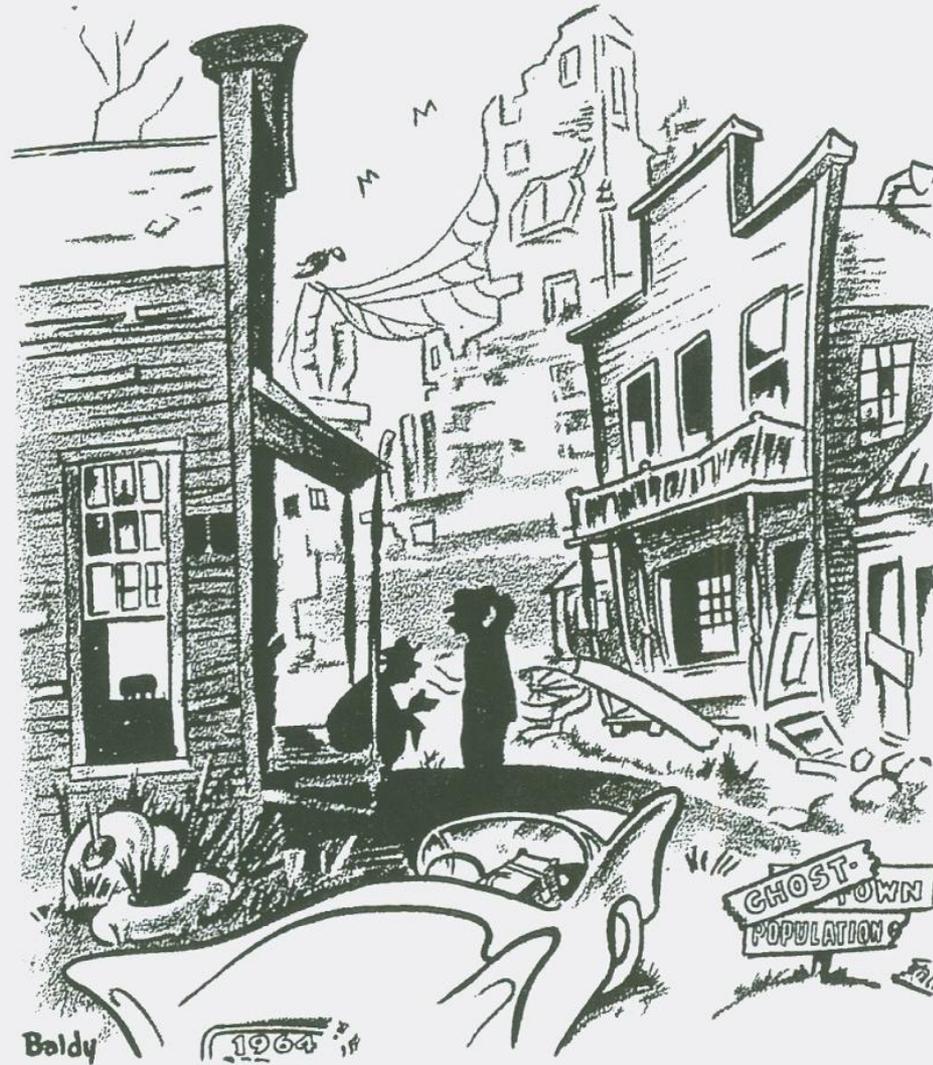
- A school voucher is a government payment to a private school on behalf of a parent.
- Vouchers are justified on grounds of freedom of parents to choose schools for their children.
- Without school vouchers, parental choices in education are dependent upon private wealth, via place of residence, tuition, or both.

# Freedom of Association

- Official reaction to *Brown v. Board* in the southern United States: Grants-in-Aid programs to maintain racial segregation.
- In Louisiana, Grants-in-Aid legislation began in 1958. State funds flowed to parents with students in segregated private schools from 1961-1968.
- Federal Courts struck down voucher programs in southern states 1964-1968.







"FIRST WE CLOSED OUR SCHOOLS, AND THEN ONE THING  
LED TO ANOTHER !"

Reprinted from THE ATLANTA JOURNAL

# Freedom of Markets

- Milton Friedman, an economist disillusioned with the growing welfare state, advocated school vouchers beginning in 1955.
- As an advisor to presidential candidates and presidents, Friedman continued to advocate vouchers to his death in 2008.
- Friedman believed that competition among schools to attract students improves education in the long run.



# Federal Proposals in the 1970s

- Beginning in 1969, the federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) urged local school districts to establish voucher programs.
- A ground rule of the federal effort was that vouchers would not be used to continue racial segregation.
- OEO urged urban school districts to apply for voucher seed money, but with the possible exception of San Jose, no urban school board was interested.



# New Hampshire Voucher Project

- Local school boards in several large cities refused federal funds to establish voucher programs.
- New Hampshire, on the other hand, applied for federal funds to start a pilot project.
- A handful of rural school districts, in 1974, agreed to plan for vouchers, but in 1976 they refused to implement voucher plans.



# Religious Freedom

- In 1955, Reverend Virgil Blum, S.J. publishes *Freedom of Choice in Education*, where he advocates school vouchers for parents to send their children to religious schools.
- In Blum's view, parents of parochial school students pay twice (once for taxes to the public schools, a second time for tuition).
- Religious duty compels such parents to send their children to non-public schools, but they pay more, an obstacle to religious freedom.



# Freedom for Urban Students

- Wisconsin enacts a voucher program for its largest city, Milwaukee, in 1990.
- Conservative governor, eager to innovate (Tommy Thompson).
- Liberal state representative, eager to protect her constituents (Polly Williams).
- Group of pre-existing private, community schools that emerged as Catholic schools on the near-North Side closed.
- Bradley Foundation located in Milwaukee.



# Religious Freedom for Urban Students

- Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program enacted 1995 in Cleveland, Ohio.
- Bishop Anthony Pilla's "Church in the City."
- Governor George Voinovich's Commission on Educational Choice.
- David Brennan, industrialist and education entrepreneur, established private schools while heading Voinovich's Commission.



# Recent Federal Efforts to encourage school vouchers

- The Supreme Court, in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, upheld school vouchers for religious schools in 2002.
- Congress enacted the Opportunity Scholarship Program, for Washington, D.C. students, in 2004; phase out began in 2009.

This program enabled 3 percent of D.C. students to attend 52 private schools.

President Obama: “our schools don't just need more resources; they need more reform. . . .”

