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RESOLUTION OPPOSING GOVERNOR LEE'S EDUCATION FREEDOM ACT

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of Tennessee, in Article XI, Section 12, states that the Tennessee legislature "shall provide for the maintenance, support, and eligibility standards of a system of free public schools;" and

WHEREAS, the fulfillment of this constitutional guarantee is heavily reliant upon adequate state funding, which is vital for equipping schools with the necessary resources to serve the various needs of Tennessee's students; and

WHEREAS, the Coffee County Board of Education is charged with governing the school district so that all students, regardless of background, needs, or ability, receive the best possible educational opportunities in order to graduate prepared to enter a postsecondary institution or the workforce; and

WHEREAS, Coffee County Schools is an educational community that serves a student population of 4,389 students, with 30% of those coming from economically disadvantaged backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Coffee County Schools offers an array of specialized programs including special education services, career and technical education training aligned with local workforce needs, early postsecondary opportunities, English as a second language services, and virtual instruction which are invaluable for meeting both individual student needs and the Tennessee Constitution's requirement of a free and public education; and

WHEREAS, Coffee County Schools is a cornerstone of the local community, not only providing education services to all students regardless of background, need, or ability, but also employing 732 staff members;

WHEREAS, Coffee County Schools is committed to maintaining local control over its schools, ensuring that they are reflective of the community's needs and values; and

WHEREAS, Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) threaten the district's ability to maintain the quality of its educational offerings as ESAs would divert state funds to private actors and disrupt local control of education

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Coffee County Board of Education hereby expresses its opposition to the Governor's "Education Freedom Act" as well as any other voucher or Education Savings Account legislation due to the detrimental impacts these programs will have on our students, schools, and community, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Coffee County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to consider the effects that Education Savings Accounts will have on local school districts and to instead seek out ways to support and strengthen public schools throughout the state.

THIS RESOLUTION is adopted as of this 11th day of December, 2023.

COFFEE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Jerry P. Weston Duma

NAME, Chairman

Freda K. Jones

NAME, Vice Chairman

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