

# **Florida court rules against vouchers: State constitution doesn't allow them**

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A state appeals court upheld in mid-August a lower court's ruling that Florida's school-voucher program violates the state constitution because it allows government-funded scholarships to be spent at religious schools.

The relevant section of the Florida constitution states that no state money "shall ever be taken from the public treasury directly or indirectly in aid . . . of any sectarian institution." Florida's voucher law, enacted in 1999 at the urging of Governor Jeb Bush, allowed students attending poorly performing public schools to apply for vouchers to attend religious and other private schools.

"This a tremendous victory for public schools and taxpayers," said Ayesha Khan of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, which had brought suit in the case. A recent analysis of state constitutions by Americans United found that 37 have wording that bars tax funds for sectarian schools.