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## NAACP MEMPHIS BRANCH OPPOSES SCHOOL VOUCHERS

*“Kelsey’s Bill Possibly Unconstitutional but Definitely Unfair.”*

**(March 28, 2017 – Memphis, TENN)** – The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Memphis Branch strongly opposes school vouchers for Shelby County, one of the largest urban school districts in the state. As the state legislator debates the pilot program in committee on Wednesday, we want to be clear that we do not want it to pass.

The students, parents and community of Memphis and Shelby County deserve the best possible opportunities for their education and the best possible options for their futures without being victimized and disenfranchised via zoning conditions. State Senator Brian Kelsey of Germantown’s proposed bill to fund school vouchers for this area, diverts \$18 million from our public school system for private schools. Kelsey’s bill focuses on districts with at least 30 schools in the bottom 5 percent in the state in academic performance. Shelby County School System is the only district that fits that specific criteria, which makes this bill “appear” to target a specific group. That appearance also calls into question its constitutional merit and causes the NAACP Memphis Branch to determine among other points that this bill is not only possibly unconstitutional but definitely unfair. If you want to pilot vouchers, do it in a small district to “test”, not ours!

For more information, please contact Deidre Malone, President of the Memphis Branch NAACP at [president@naacpmemphis.org](mailto:president@naacpmemphis.org).

### **About the Memphis Branch NAACP:**

*The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation’s oldest civil rights organization, and the Memphis Branch NAACP is the largest branch of the organization in the United States. The mission of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. During the entire year of 2017, the Memphis Branch NAACP is celebrating 100 years of service to the community.*

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