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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 11, 2017

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Senate jeopardizes school funding for kids over failed voucher plan *ATPE opposes vouchers*

AUSTIN, Texas — Today, the Senate leadership jeopardized a bill designed to increase funding for all Texas children. In the eleventh hour, the Senate Education Committee proposed adding an education savings account (ESA) voucher for students with special needs to House Bill (HB) 21, a school finance bill that previously enjoyed broad support. The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) is disappointed that the lieutenant governor would put his own political agenda ahead of the needs of 5.2 million Texas children.

“Basically, voucher proponents were unable to pass a bill on its own merits,” ATPE Executive Director Gary Godsey said. “So, they’ve tacked it on to HB 21 in a last-minute attempt to push thorough bad legislation on the back of school finance reform, despite the fact that the House has already voted down vouchers multiple times this session.”

The bill is expected to be voted out of committee today and could be presented to the Senate as early as Monday.

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The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators' association in Texas with more than 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for 5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public education.