March 8, 2022

The Honorable Governor Spencer Cox
Utah State Capitol Complex
350 North State Street, Suite 200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Dear Governor Cox:

On behalf of Utah educators, the Utah Education Association is asking you to veto a bill that is poor policy for public education.

**SB 62 Sub 4 Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship Program Amendments** expands a voucher program for students with special needs to non-special needs siblings of recipients (lines 63-69). By way of comparison, the Carson Smith program has supported special needs students since 2005 and does not allow for siblings to receive vouchers.

The Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship has been in existence for less than two years (enacted in May 2020 special session) and SB 62 expands eligibility before any program data has been received or reviewed by the State Board of Education. Required reporting includes the number of students participating from each school district, administrative costs of the program, standards used by the scholarship granting organization to determine student eligibility and savings to the state and districts for students utilizing the scholarship program (lines 195-206). Expansion of the program before this required reporting is completed by the scholarship granting organization is premature. Any program expansion must be based on clear data and demonstrated need.

In addition, the legislation restricts existing State Board of Education oversight, including rule-making authority, over the scholarship granting organization (lines 174, 176-183 and 258-267).

We believe bipartisan opposition to SB 62 Sub 4 in both the House and the Senate, as well as the narrow passage of the bill, indicates the divisive nature of the expansion of this program. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Respectfully,

Heidi Matthews
President, Utah Education Association

cc: Neil Abercrombie
    Brittney Cummins
    Jennifer Boehme
    Renée Pinkney
    Sara Jones