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**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON REPORT BY DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, released the following statement in response to the Department of Education's report "Evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts After One Year."

"America's competitiveness in today's rapidly shrinking world hinges on our ability to ensure access to the highest quality education for all our children. The study released today by the Department of Education once again demonstrates that vouchers are not the answer – students who were offered vouchers showed no improvement over their peers in the DC public schools. Five years of chronic under-funding of our commitments made in the No Child Left Behind Act have left public schools struggling to implement essential school reforms. This study, along with a national study released by the Department of Education last summer showing that private schools do no better in educating our children than private schools, underscore that it is outrageous to divert scarce federal public education dollars to pay for vouchers to private schools. We should be supporting our public schools, not harming them."

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