

## GIVE PARENTS CONTROL BY ALLOWING THEM TO SELECT THE SCHOOL THEIR CHILD ATTENDS

Every student deserves access to a quality education that provides the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful career and fulfilling life. Unfortunately, many children in America are still assigned to schools that do not meet their individual needs, and many parents are limited in their ability to move to a new community for a different school.

Parental school choice allows families to take education dollars for their child to an approved education provider of their choice. Parents have choices between traditional public schools, public charter schools, private schools, virtual learning, and homeschooling. Additionally, parents can access private school choice through tax credit scholarship programs, vouchers, education savings accounts, and individual tax credits.

School choice options for families have grown over time. Today, there are more than 7,500 charter schools across the country serving more than 3.3 million students. Twenty-nine voucher programs are offered in 16 different states and serve more than 248,245 students. Additionally, there are 26 tax-credit scholarship programs in 21 states serving more than 300,000 students.

March 2020 will forever be remembered as the time public schools in America closed their doors, leaving millions of children and families without on-site school. Their subsequent failure to be more proactive in reopening their campuses created an increase in support for school choice policies nationwide.

Unfortunately, the Biden Administration has stalled progress on advancing school choice policies. The Administration recently proposed an unprecedented

rewrite of the bipartisan federal Charter Schools Program (CSP). The new language gives the Department of Education the authority to act like a restrictive national charter school board, with one-size-fits-all rules. These regulations would severely limit the types of schools that could apply for funding and would restrict any potential expansion of charter school programs. It also recommended to phase out the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program by 2023.

In spite of the current administration's policies, 2021 was hailed as the "Year of School Choice." Seven new school choice programs were created, and 21 existing programs were expanded across 18 states. In 2022, more than double this number of states have seen legislation introduced that would expand educational freedom for families.

The timing of the increase in new legislation empowering parents is a response to what has happened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Educational freedom is a tool that has a proven record of putting students and families first, and parents need to be given the power to choose the best educational opportunities for their children. The heartfelt efforts of these concerned parents at local school board meetings have created a movement and a moment in time when families are choosing educational freedom.

ZIP codes and backgrounds should not determine a child's future. Instead, scaling up choice in education across the Nation can increase competition among providers, reduce opportunity gaps for our more vulnerable students, and improve the quality of education for all children.

## **THE FACTS**

- ★ Just 18% of Americans are opposed to school choice.
- ★ Support for school choice in America has increased from 64% to 72% since April 2020.
- ★ Students who live in states that offer more school choice options have higher reading and math test scores.
- ★ Standardized test scores significantly improve for students who exercised school choice compared to similar students who did not exercise such choice.
- ★ Students who earned a scholarship from the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program in Washington, D.C., are 12% more likely to complete high school.
- ★ Florida workers between the ages of 23 and 25 who had attended charter schools earned more annually than students who attended traditional public schools.

## **THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA**

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Expand education freedom and opportunity for students by providing incentives to fund scholarship awards to cover expenses related to K-12 public and private education.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Enable statewide open enrollment and eliminate school district boundaries, allowing parents to enroll their children at any school in the state.
- ★ Expand access to charter schools.
- ★ Assist low-income families and special-needs students by providing education scholarship accounts.

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