

Testimony Before the United States House Committee on Ways & Means Regarding “Educational Freedom and Opportunity for American Families, Students, and Workers”

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Opening Statement

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Neal, and Distinguished Members of Congress,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here today.

I’m here to testify in support of expanding education freedom through tax credit scholarships such as those included in the Educational Choice for Children Act and through 529 expansion.¹ These proposals would supercharge the parental empowerment already being unleashed at the state level, most notably in red states, and expand opportunities to families in all states.

We’re in the middle of a school choice revolution. Ten states have gone all-in on school choice in the past two years. In other words, every single family in those states can now take their children’s state-funded education dollars to the education providers of their choosing.² Even more states are expanding or passing new programs.

You can still take education dollars to your assigned public school: if you like your public school, you can keep your public school. If not, families in those states can take their education dollars to a private education provider that best meets their needs.³

The momentum is on the side of education freedom. The latest RealClear Opinion Research polling from June of this year finds that 71% of Americans support school choice, with supermajority support among Republicans, Democrats, and independents. That support surged by 7 points since April 2020.⁴

These trends are no accident. The power-hungry unions held children’s education hostage to secure multiple multi-billion-dollar ransom payments from taxpayers. But they overplayed their hand and awakened a sleeping giant: parents who want more of a say in their children’s education.

¹ H.R.531 - Educational Choice for Children Act. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/531/cosponsors>

² The Children Win in North Carolina. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/north-carolina-universal-school-choice-roy-cooper-tricia-cotham-434f588e>

³ Can the GOP Become the Parents’ Party? The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/can-the-gop-become-the-parents-party-education-schooling-arizona-republican-school-choice-classroom-savings-11656359844>

⁴ New Poll: School Choice Support Soars from 2020. American Federation for Children. Retrieved from <https://www.federationforchildren.org/new-poll-school-choice-support-soars-from-2020/>

The teachers unions engaged in fearmongering every step of the way. The American Federation of Teachers threatened⁵ “safety strikes” in 2020, lobbied⁶ the CDC to make it more difficult to reopen schools, and their boss – Randi Weingarten – called⁷ the president’s plan to reopen schools “reckless,” “callous,” and “cruel.” Chicago Teachers Union posted then later deleted a tweet⁸ claiming, “the push to reopen schools is rooted in sexism, racism and misogyny” yet one of their board members was caught vacationing in Puerto Rico in person while they were still railing against going back to work in person.⁹ Evidence showed that in-person school did not spread COVID-19¹⁰, but school closures were a super-spreader of learning loss.

The unintended benefit of remote learning – which really should’ve been called “remotely learning” – was that families got to see what was happening in the classroom. Parents who thought their children were in great public schools started to see another dimension of school quality that cannot be captured by a standardized test: whether the school’s curriculum aligns with their values.

School choice is a win-win solution. Public schools up their game in response to competition. Twenty-six of the 29 existing studies on the topic find positive effects of private school choice competition on outcomes in the public schools.¹¹ The most recent peer-reviewed meta-analysis on the subject found the same relationship.¹² School choice is a rising tide that lifts all boats.¹³

The most advantaged already have some form of school choice. They can already afford to pay out of pocket for private school tuition and fees or move to the nicest neighborhoods that just so happen to be assigned to the best “public” schools. I’m sure many of the members on this committee either went to private school, sent their own kids to private school, or both. President Biden did both.¹⁴ I’m glad his family had those opportunities. But politicians shouldn’t pull up the ladder from behind themselves and fight against school choice for others. Funding students directly allows more families to access education options. School choice is an equalizer.

We already fund students directly when it comes to Pell Grants for higher education. This program allows the funding to follow the student to the public or private, religious or non-religious, higher education provider of their choosing. The same goes for taxpayer-funded pre-K programs such as Head Start. The same goes for food stamps and Medicaid.

⁵ Teachers union threatens ‘safety strikes’ before Biden speech. Politico. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/28/aft-strikes-school-reopening-384133>

⁶ Top teachers union lobbied CDC on school reopening. Fox News. Retrieved from <https://www.foxnews.com/us/top-teachers-union-lobbied-cdc-on-school-reopening>

⁷ ‘Reckless, callous, cruel’: teachers’ chief denounces Trump plan to reopen schools. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/17/trump-teachers-reopening-schools-coronavirus-randi-weingarten>

⁸ Chicago Teachers Union deletes tweet claiming school reopening push ‘rooted’ in sexism, racism. New York Post. Retrieved from <https://nypost.com/2020/12/07/chicago-teachers-union-deletes-tweet-claiming-school-reopening-push-rooted-in-sexism-racism/>

⁹ Chicago Teachers Union leader is blasted for pushing to keep schools closed because classrooms are ‘unsafe’ while she vacations in Puerto Rico. Daily Mail. Retrieved from <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9105697/Teachers-union-leader-blasted-pushing-schools-closed-vacations-Puerto-Rico.html>

¹⁰ Oster, Emily. *Washington Post*. “Schools are not spreading covid-19. This new data makes the case.” Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/11/20/covid-19-schools-data-reopening-safety/>

¹¹ The 123s of School Choice. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123s-of-school-choice-2/>

¹² Jabbar, H., Fong, C. J., Germain, E., Li, D., Sanchez, J., Sun, W. L., & Devall, M. (2022). The competitive effects of school choice on student achievement: A systematic review. *Educational Policy*, 36(2), 247-281. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0895904819874756?journalCode=epxa>

¹³ Wolf, P. J., Greene, J. P., Paul, J. D., & Ladner, M. (2023). Education Freedom and Student Achievement: Is More School Choice Associated with Higher State-Level Performance on the NAEP? *Journal of School Choice*. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15582159.2023.2183450>

¹⁴ Biden, Pelosi, other top Dems sent kids to private school but oppose school choice. Fox News. Retrieved from <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-pelosi-top-dems-sent-kids-private-school-oppose-choice>

We should apply the same logic to K-12 education. Education funding is meant for educating children, not for protecting a particular institution. We should fund students, not systems.

Why would you support funding individuals directly when it comes to higher education and pre-K (and everything else), but oppose it only for in-between years of K-12 education?

Choice is the norm with higher education, pre-K, and just about any other industry. But choice threatens an entrenched special interest only when it comes to K-12 education, so, of course, they fight as hard as possible against any change to the status quo.

The power imbalance between families and the government school monopoly is finally shifting. For far too long in K-12 education, the only special interests represented the employees – the adults – in the system. But now, the kids have a union of their own: their parents. Elected officials would be wise to listen to them – and free families from the clutches of the teachers unions once and for all.

School Choice Myth-Busting¹⁵

Myth #1: School Choice Defunds Public Schools

The teachers' union's main argument against allowing families to take their children's education dollars elsewhere reveals their misguided mindset. They argue that school choice "defunds" public schools. But the reality is that the funding doesn't belong to the public schools in the first place. If anything, public schools defund families. School choice initiatives just return the money to the hands of the intended beneficiaries of the funding—the children and their families.

But wait. Why would giving families a choice "defund" public schools, anyway? Their main argument is an admission that its advocates understand many families aren't satisfied with their residentially assigned government schools. The best schools would welcome the competition. Shrieking in fear about allowing families to choose your competition suggests otherwise. It turns out the main argument "against" school choice is one of the best arguments in favor of allowing families to have exit options.

If the public schools were meeting the needs of families, then opponents of school choice would have nothing to fear.

In fact, surveys find fewer than half of the families with students in public schools would keep their children in them if given meaningful options to educate their children elsewhere.¹⁶ This year, Gallup found that trust in the public school system reached an all-time low, with only 26% of Americans saying they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in public schools. Only 9% of Republicans reported a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in public schools.¹⁷ No wonder opponents of educational freedom fight so hard to prevent families from having an exit option.

Another problem with that argument is that public schools financially benefit when they lose students to school choice competition. U.S. public schools spent over \$17,000 per student in the 2019-20 school year.¹⁸ Public schools are only partially funded based on enrollment counts, meaning they can keep substantial amounts of funding for students who leave to private schools. Imagine if Walmart were able to keep large portions of your grocery funding each week even after your family started shopping at Trader Joe's. That would be a fantastic deal for Walmart. Public schools should be happy they get to keep any money at all for students they no longer educate.¹⁹

Myth #2: School Choice Would Destroy Public Schools

A related myth is that school choice would "destroy" public schools. But the children who remain in public schools are generally better off because school choice competition incentivizes public schools to improve. A large body of evidence suggests competitive pressures from private school choice leads to improvements in outcomes for children who remain in the public school system. This is likely because public schools tend to

¹⁵ School Choice Myths. American Federation for Children. Retrieved from <https://www.federationforchildren.org/school-choice-myths/>

¹⁶ DiPerna, P., Catt, A. D., & Shaw, M. (2019). 2019 Schooling in America: Public Opinion on K-12 Education, Busing, Technology, and School Choice. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED600665>; Support for School Choice Surges as Schools Start. American Federation for Children. Retrieved from <https://www.federationforchildren.org/support-for-school-choice-surges-as-schools-start/>

¹⁷ Historically Low Faith in U.S. Institutions Continues. Gallup. Retrieved from <https://news.gallup.com/poll/508169/historically-low-faith-institutions-continues.aspx>

¹⁸ National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of Education Statistics. Table 236.55. Total and current expenditures per pupil in public elementary and secondary schools: Selected school years, 1919-20 through 2019-20. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_236.55.asp

¹⁹ DeAngelis, C. A., & McCluskey, N. P. (Eds.). (2020). School choice myths: Setting the record straight on education freedom. Washington, DC: Cato Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.cato.org/books/school-choice-myths>

change their approaches for the better to avoid losing any of the funding associated with students who choose to leave.

Twenty-six of the 29 studies on the topic find statistically significant positive effects of school choice competition on outcomes in public schools.²⁰ A peer-reviewed systematic review of the evidence from 2013 similarly found that 20 of 21 studies revealed positive effects of private school competition.²¹

School choice is a rising tide that lifts all boats.

More recently, the most comprehensive meta-analysis of the evidence on this topic found statistically significant positive effects of school choice competition on public schools overall.²² As a result of competitive pressures, students do not even have to participate in school choice programs to benefit from them. This body of evidence is generally positive. But the right of families to choose the educational setting that works best for their own children should not hinge on the competitive response of a government-run institution. And besides, these kinds of arguments aren't used to prevent advantaged families from choosing the school that works best for their children. They should not be used to take similar opportunities away from less advantaged families, either.

Myth #3: School Choice Leads to Inequities

Opponents of educational freedom argue that school choice leads to “inequities.” But trapping disadvantaged students in public schools that have been failing them for decades exacerbates inequities. Funding students directly leads to more equality of opportunity by allowing more children to have educational options. Advantaged families already have some form of school choice. They are more likely to have the resources to pay for private education out of pocket or to purchase a residence that is assigned to the best public school in the area. Inequities are inherent in the public school system because of the artificial barriers to accessing the best schools that residential assignment creates.

Parents have been fined or even thrown in jail for lying about their home address to get their children into better “public” schools.²³ Advantaged families can even buy attendance at some top public school districts that charge tuition for students living outside their attendance zones.²⁴ In this way, many public schools are not “public” in any meaningful sense of the word. They are not open to the public because they discriminate on the basis of ZIP code. They are not true “public goods” because they are excludable and rivalrous.²⁵

Allowing the money to follow the child to the best educational setting leads to more equality of opportunity because it allows less-advantaged families to access alternatives. School choice is an equalizer.

²⁰ The 123s of School Choice. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123s-of-school-choice-2/>

²¹ Egalite, A. J. (2013). Measuring competitive effects from school voucher programs: A systematic review. *Journal of School Choice*, 7(4), 443-464. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15582159.2013.837759>

²² Jabbar, H., Fong, C. J., Germain, E., Li, D., Sanchez, J., Sun, W. L., & Devall, M. (2022). The competitive effects of school choice on student achievement: A systematic review. *Educational Policy*, 36(2), 247-281. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0895904819874756?journalCode=epxa>

²³ Her Only Crime Was Helping Her Kids. The Atlantic. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/09/her-only-crime-was-helping-her-kid/597979/>

²⁴ Some People Are Buying Their Way Into Top Public Schools. That's Not How School Choice Should Work. Reason Magazine. Retrieved from <https://reason.com/2019/06/21/some-people-are-buying-their-way-into-top-public-schools-thats-not-how-school-choice-should-work/>

²⁵ Is Public Schooling a Public Good? An Analysis of Schooling Externalities. Cato Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/public-schooling-public-good-analysis-schooling-externalities>

Myth #4: School Choice Is Unaccountable

Defenders of the status quo will argue that school choice is unaccountable. But school choice comes with the strongest form of accountability that exists: Families can vote with their feet to institutions that best meet their needs and take their money with them. Underperforming private schools shut down. Underperforming government schools get more money. Private schools are directly accountable to families.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, private schools fought to reopen; public schools fought to remain closed. The main difference was one of incentives. Private schools understood families could take their money elsewhere.

If the government schools are so much more accountable than private schools, their defenders should have nothing to worry about. And why do the same politicians making this argument send their own children to the private schools, if they are so unaccountable? Actions speak louder than words.

Myth #5: Public Funds are for Public Schools

There are no such thing as “public” funds. They are all taxpayer dollars. And tax credit scholarship programs like the proposal included in the Educational Choice for Children Act are all funded by private donations. As the U.S. Supreme Court²⁶ ruled in *ACSTO v. Winn* (2011), private dollars remain private until they “come into the tax collector’s hands.”

The same people making this argument support programs that allow “public” dollars to be used at private institutions for every other level of education and every other industry. We fund students directly with taxpayer dollars when it comes to Pell Grants and the GI Bill for higher education. With each of these programs, the funding follows the student to the public or private, religious or non-religious, higher education provider of their choosing. The same goes for taxpayer-funded pre-K programs such as Head Start. We also fund individuals directly when it comes to other taxpayer-funded initiatives such as food stamps and Medicaid.

We don’t force low-income families to spend their food stamp dollars at residentially assigned government-run grocery stores. Instead, families are allowed to choose to take the funding to Walmart, Trader Joe’s, Safeway, or just about any other provider of groceries. The same freedom ought to exist for K-12 education.

Myth #6: School Choice is Bad for Teachers

The concerns of public school teachers reaching into their pockets to pay for supplies each year are understandable. But the problem isn’t with their private and charter school competition. The problem is that their monopolistic employer doesn’t have any meaningful incentive to spend money wisely, on the most important educational resource in the school: the teachers in the classrooms.

²⁶ Docket Watch: The Constitutionality of School Choice Tax Credits (*Gaddy v. Georgia Department of Revenue*). The Federalist Society. Retrieved from <https://fedsoc.org/commentary/fedsoc-blog/docket-watch-the-constitutionality-of-school-choice-tax-credits-gaddy-v-georgia-department-of-revenue>

The current system does not prioritize classroom teachers because it has no real incentive to do so. Inflation-adjusted U.S. public school current spending per student increased by 155% between 1970 and 2020.²⁷ Average U.S. public school teacher salary only increased by 9% in real terms over the same period.²⁸

Without competition, the money goes to administrative bloat and staffing surges. Kennesaw State University professor Ben Scafidi found that the U.S. increased public school spending per student by 27% from 1992 to 2014. Real teacher salaries dropped by 2% over the same period.²⁹ Between 2000 and 2017, student elementary and secondary school enrollment increased by about 7%. Over the same period, the number of teachers in the system increased by about 8%, the number of principals and assistant principals increased by about 33%, and the number of school district administrative staff increased by about 75%.³⁰

Five studies have found that private and charter school competition lead to higher teacher salaries in public schools.³¹ Competition in the market for goods and services benefits customers. Competition in the labor market benefits employees.

Myth #7: School Choice Would Defund Rural Schools, and those Families Don't Have Any Other Choices

Opponents of education freedom will present two logically incompatible statements when claiming rural geography is a legitimate barrier to school choice. On the one hand, they will claim that rural constituents will not benefit from school choice programs because “the public school is the only option.” However, in the next breath and with a straight face, they claim that school choice will defund their fantastic rural public schools.

Obvious questions arise. If the rural public schools are so great, why would they worry about losing students? But more importantly, if it's true that the public school is the only option, it cannot lose any per-pupil funding because students have nowhere else to go. If anything, opponents in rural areas should be the last ones arguing against school choice on the basis that it would “defund” their schools.³²

As Florida has increased its scholarship programs over the past two decades, the number of private schools in the state's rural areas has increased from 69 in 2002 to 120 in 2022. Although more than 70% of Florida students are eligible for private-school scholarships, the share of students in Florida's rural private schools has grown by only 2.4 percentage points since 2012.³³

The truth is that rural families benefit from school choice as much as any others do. More options are better than none, and supply isn't fixed. If you put taxpayer-funded education dollars in the hands of parents, new private education providers will sprout up to meet demand. What's more, with an increasing number of

²⁷ National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of Education Statistics. Table 236.55. Total and current expenditures per pupil in public elementary and secondary schools: Selected school years, 1919-20 through 2019-20 Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_236.55.asp

²⁸ National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of Education Statistics. Table 211.60. Estimated average annual salary of teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, by state: Selected school years, 1969-70 through 2021-22. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_211.60.asp

²⁹ Scafidi, B. (2017). Back to the Staffing Surge: The Great Teacher Salary Stagnation and the Decades-Long Employment Growth in American Public Schools. *EdChoice*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED583004>

³⁰ Growth in Administrative Staff, Assistant Principals Far Outpaces Teacher Hiring. Education Next. Retrieved from <https://www.educationnext.org/growth-administrative-staff-assistant-principals-far-outpaces-teacher-hiring/>

³¹ School choice benefits teachers too. Washington Examiner. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/school-choice-benefits-teachers-too>

³² The Little Red Schoolhouse Could Do With a Little Competition. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/school-competition-savings-account-rural-district-private-choice-charter-florida-teachers-union-achievement-education-gap-11671218190>

³³ Special report: Separating fact from fiction about rural school choice. ReimaginedEd. Retrieved from <https://www.reimaginedonline.org/2022/11/special-report-separating-fact-from-fiction-about-rural-school-choice/>

school choice programs, including ECCA, that have multiple, flexible uses, every family stands to benefit, even those in rural areas with limited numbers of physical school buildings.

School choice is popular among Republican voters in rural areas. Eighty-eight percent of Texas Republican primary voters supported it on the 2022 ballot, up 9 points since 2018.³⁴ Among the 200 Texas counties with fewer than 100,000 residents, support remained at 88%. The same applies in other states. A 2022 poll from Iowa found that “the strongest net favorability” for education savings accounts “was from Iowans in rural communities,” who were 21.8 percentage points likelier to support than oppose the program.³⁵ Polling by the University of Texas at Austin from June 2023 found that 66% of Texans in rural areas support school choice, whereas support among Texans from suburban and urban areas was at 55% to 59%, respectively.³⁶

The nine most rural states, according to Census Bureau data, all have some form of private school choice. West Virginia has the second-most-expansive education savings account program in the nation, behind Arizona. Maine³⁷ and Vermont³⁸ are home to the oldest private-school voucher programs in the country—both passed in the 19th century—which were specifically designed for students in rural areas without public schools. Lawmakers figured out, over a hundred years ago, that not having a lot of education options was a good reason to expand opportunities, not to restrict them.

Myth #8: School Choice Segregates

Public schools are already segregated, and the most advantaged families already have education options. Funding students directly allows more families to access education opportunities.

For example, as Professor Anna J. Egalite wrote³⁹ about her peer-reviewed evaluation of Louisiana’s private school choice program, “82% of student transfers made possible by the Louisiana Scholarship Program reduced racial stratification in the voucher students’ former public schools, a clear win for desegregation efforts in the state of Louisiana.”

Dr. Egalite also summarized the overall findings of the evaluation: “A third of all voucher transfers resulted in more integrated public and private schools, an additional 57 percent of transfers had mixed effects (positive effects in one sector, negative effects in another), and just 9 percent of transfers had negative effects.”

Conflating voluntary schooling decisions with forced segregation is disingenuous and minimizes real harm done by heavy-handed government in the past.

As 50CAN’s Derrell Bradford⁴⁰ has pointed out, “The current system leaves America’s public schools more segregated now than they were 40 years ago.” He also wrote, “In many states, it’s a crime for parents to send

³⁴ 2022 Republican Primary Ballot Propositions. Texas GOP. Retrieved from <https://texasgop.org/republican-primary-ballot-propositions/>

³⁵ Iowans (Especially Rural Iowans) Support ESAs. Iowans for Tax Relief Foundation. Retrieved from <https://itrfoundation.org/iowans-especially-rural-iowans-support-esas/>

³⁶ June 2023 University of Texas/Texas Politics Project Poll. The Texas Politics Project at the University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from <https://texaspolitics.utexas.edu/set/support-or-oppose-establishing-voucher-educational-savings-account-esa-or-other-%E2%80%9Cschool-choice-0>

³⁷ Maine – Town Tuitioning Program. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/programs/maine-town-tuitioning-program/>

³⁸ Vermont – Town Tuitioning Program. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/programs/vermont-town-tuitioning-program/>

³⁹ The Effect of Louisiana’s Voucher Program on School Integration: A Response to The Century Foundation. Education Next. Retrieved from <https://www.educationnext.org/effect-louisianas-voucher-program-school-integration-response-century-foundation/>

⁴⁰ The Left Defends the Legacy of Redlining. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-left-defends-the-legacy-of-redlining-11623615965>

their children to a school for which they are not zoned, regardless of whether or not another school can better serve a student's individual needs. Families desperate to enroll their kids in better public schools frequently lie about where they live to enroll their children in a public school outside of their school district. In some states school officials hire off-duty police to follow kids home and make sure they're living in the correct school district or school zone. This isn't what public education is supposed to be."

Some segregationists even sided with the teachers union in the 1950's in their opposition to private school choice.⁴¹ As pointed out in *The Wall Street Journal*, "As early as 1955, economists such as Friedman began touting vouchers as a strategy to expedite integration. Virginia's segregationist hard-liners recognized the likely outcomes and began attacking school choice as an existential threat to their white-supremacist order." School choice is an equalizer.

Today's evidence shows private school choice initiatives lead to racial integration. Six out of the seven existing studies on the topic find that private school choice integrates.⁴²

Myth #9: School Choice is a Trojan Horse that would lead to Private and Home School Regulation

Some claim to support the idea of parental education rights but suggest that school choice will place an undue burden on private and home education. Those making this argument are missing the forest for the trees. Amid an educational crisis, we cannot make perfect the enemy of the good. The movement to empower parents should take incremental wins even if they don't automatically change the education status quo. Opposing giving families a choice to accept the funding or not only cements the government school monopoly. It is no coincidence that teachers union boss Randi Weingarten has repeated this same fear-mongering argument — she wants to protect her interests at the expense of children and their families.⁴³

The reality is, government already can regulate private and home education without school choice. Oregon outlawed private education in 1922.⁴⁴ That was not done because of a school choice program — it was because authoritarians wanted to control the minds of other people's children. Thankfully, three years later, the U.S. Supreme Court⁴⁵ overturned that bigoted law in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925), when the court famously remarked that "the child is not the mere creature of the State."

Today, in New York, private schools must provide an education that is "substantially equivalent" to what is offered in public schools, which basically defeats the purpose of private education.⁴⁶ New York also has one of the worst homeschooling laws in the nation when it comes to onerous regulation, and the state doesn't have any private school choice programs. Massachusetts and Rhode Island also have some of the least homeschool-friendly laws in the nation — according to the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) — and they don't have any private school choice programs, either. Iowa, Indiana, and Oklahoma — on the

⁴¹ School Choice's Antiracist History. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/school-choice-antiracist-history-integration-funding-segregation-11634568700>

⁴² The 123s of School Choice. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123s-of-school-choice-2/>

⁴³ Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/rweingarten/status/1539288376934903809>

⁴⁴ *Pierce vs. Society of Sisters*. Oregon Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/packets/1#:~:text=The%20Oregon%20Compulsory%20Education%20Bill,guardians%20who%20broke%20the%20law>

⁴⁵ *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*. Oyez. Retrieved from <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/268us510>

⁴⁶ NY adopts new guidelines for cracking down on religious schools. *New York Post*. Retrieved from <https://nypost.com/2022/09/13/ny-state-education-board-approves-new-nonpublic-school-oversight-rules/>

other hand – each have universal school choice programs and some of the most homeschool-friendly laws in the nation.⁴⁷ The Educational Choice for Children Act has also been endorsed by HSLDA.⁴⁸

It's more likely that government overreach will happen in the future if millions of kids are stuck without exit options today, the status quo is further entrenched, and future generations continue to support more government involvement going forward. We might as well give families a choice to accept the funding or not, which will build a bigger coalition for individualized education. Politics is all about organized interests fighting for what they want. Supporters of private and home education freedom will be more likely to succeed in fending off any future calls for regulation if they have a bigger tent – a broader coalition – to fight against government overreach. Getting more families to benefit from private and home education – through access to school choice initiatives – would also make the concept of private education more mainstream. If the concept of private education is more mainstream, the rest of society should be less likely to call to regulate it out of existence in the future.⁴⁹

We should all be vigilant in watching out for interference in individualized education, and fight against it together. We should be sure to read the bills and call for amendments if onerous regulations are included. If the government tried to interfere with individualized education today, without school choice, school choice advocates would oppose it. If the government tried to do so in the future, with school choice, we should do the same thing and fight back, together.

No school choice program forces any families or schools to accept the money. It's all voluntary. Families can make their own decisions about whether to accept the money. Families should feel free to reject the funding if they want, but they shouldn't have the power to force others to spend their children's taxpayer-funded education dollars at government schools.

“ESA students” can be defined separately from “homeschool” students in the law (as in Arizona). If parents accept the funding, their child is an “ESA student,” which is considered separately in the law.

As Thomas Sowell once said, “there are no solutions. There are only tradeoffs.” There are potential costs and benefits of every policy change. Those fear-mongering are focusing on one possible cost of giving families a choice without realizing that there are large guaranteed costs of opposing that choice and cementing the status quo. The real costs of cementing the education monopoly outweigh the possible future costs of giving families a choice.

⁴⁷ Homeschool Laws by State. Home School Legal Defense Association. Retrieved from https://hsllda.org/legal?gclid=Cj0KCCQjw84anBhCtARIsAISI-xcieWSFWHJtyVIMwxepyVThcqsq4FWFq4PgHiUJq_QQhQuXJdLF_VcaAmSKEALw_wcB

⁴⁸ Endorsements for the Educational Choice for Children Act (ECCA). Invest in Education Coalition. Retrieved from <https://investineducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ECCA-coalition-endorsements-6-14-23.pdf>

⁴⁹ Should Libertarians Support School Choice? A Soho Forum Debate. Reason Magazine. Retrieved from <https://reason.com/video/2023/08/24/should-libertarians-support-school-choice-a-soho-forum-debate/>

School Choice is a Political Winner

Milton Friedman⁵⁰ once said, the way that that you solve problems is not “to elect the right people. The important thing is to establish a political climate of opinion which will make it politically profitable for the wrong people to do the right thing.”

School choice has emerged as a clear winner among constituents across many types of districts. In last year’s midterm elections, there wasn’t a red wave or a blue wave, but there was a school choice wave. Seventy-six percent of the candidates supported by my organization – the American Federation for Children and our state affiliates – won their races in 2022.⁵¹

Exit polling suggested Florida Governor Ron DeSantis owed his narrow 2018 gubernatorial victory in part to “school-choice moms,” as James Madison Institute’s William Mattox argued in *The Wall Street Journal* that year.⁵²

The latest RealClear Opinion Research polling from June of this year finds that 71% of Americans support school choice, with supermajority support among Republicans, Democrats, and independents. That overall support for school choice surged by 7 points since April 2020.⁵³ A 2022 poll by OnMessage Inc. found that 66 percent of Americans support (only 22 percent oppose) a federal tax credit scholarship program like the one in the Educational Choice for Children Act. That same poll found majority support (over 60 percent) for the program across political parties.⁵⁴

School choice is on the Republican Party platform nationally and is part of the U.S. House Republicans’ Commitment to America Agenda.⁵⁵

Voters do not like hypocrisy. Many of the same politicians who oppose school choice – like President Joe Biden, California Governor Gavin Newsom, Representative Nancy Pelosi, Senator Elizabeth Warren, and North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper – who declared a state of emergency over school choice this year – all sent their own kids to private schools.⁵⁶ A national poll by from 2022 found that voters overwhelmingly responded that they would be less likely to support a candidate who exercise school choice for their own family but oppose it for others.⁵⁷

Glenn Youngkin’s 2021 gubernatorial election in Virginia also demonstrates a political power shift in favor of parental rights in education. Mr. Youngkin, a Republican, won the race against former Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe in a state that went 10 points to President Joe Biden just the year before, in 2020. Mr. McAuliffe was ahead in the polls until he let the mask slip at the final debate, when he said, “I don’t think parents should be telling schools what they should teach.” Instead of backpedaling, Mr. McAuliffe chose to

⁵⁰ Retrieved from <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/738162-i-do-not-believe-that-the-solution-to-our-problem>

⁵¹ The School-Choice Election Wave. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-school-choice-wave-midterm-2022-florida-desantis-education-freedom-parents-teachers-unions-illinois-pennsylvania-11668090033>

⁵² ‘School Choice Moms’ Tipped the Governor’s Florida Race. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from https://www.wsj.com/articles/school-choice-moms-tipped-the-governors-florida-race-1542757880?mod=article_inline

⁵³ New Poll: School Choice Support Soars from 2020. American Federation for Children. Retrieved from <https://www.federationforchildren.org/new-poll-school-choice-support-soars-from-2020/>

⁵⁴ New Poll: Invest in Education: Support for Ed Freedom Continues to Soar. American Federation for Children. Retrieved from <https://federationforchildren.org/new-poll-invest-in-education-support-for-ed-freedom-continues-to-soar/>

⁵⁵ Republican Solutions for America’s Education System. Retrieved from https://republicans-edlabor.house.gov/uploadedfiles/republican_solutions_to_american_education_system.pdf

⁵⁶ Biden, Pelosi, other top Dems sent kids to private school but oppose school choice. *Fox News*. Retrieved from <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-pelosi-top-dems-sent-kids-private-school-oppose-choice>

⁵⁷ New Poll: Voters Overwhelmingly Reject Elected Officials Who Are School Choice Hypocrites. American Federation for Children. Retrieved from <https://www.federationforchildren.org/new-poll-voters-overwhelmingly-reject-elected-officials-who-are-school-choice-hypocrites/>

quadruple down on that anti-parent stance all the way up until the night before the election, when he had American Federation of Teachers president, Randi Weingarten, stumping for him. A Virginia mother went on CNN the next day stating that the Randi Weingarten endorsement – the school closer being McAuliffe’s campaign closer – was “the nail in the coffin” moment for her.⁵⁸ Washington Post exit polling indicated that education was the second most important issue in the election, and Youngkin won by 6 points with education voters.

Also in 2021, the National School Boards Association sent a letter⁵⁹ to the Biden administration suggesting some parents protesting at school board meetings should be investigated for “domestic terrorism.” Although the NSBA’s letter intended to silence and bully concerned parents into submission, it had the opposite effect. Most states decided to cut ties with the organization after they sent out the letter.⁶⁰ Parents have real power when they band together and fight back against systems that do not respect their rights.

The success of education freedom supporters sent a message about what constituents in both parties wanted. Shortly before the 2022 gubernatorial election in Pennsylvania, then Attorney General Josh Shapiro changed his education platform on his campaign website to include explicit support for private school choice in the form of Lifeline Scholarships, a proposal championed by Republican lawmakers in the state.

In 2023, Governor Shapiro even went on Fox News to voice his support for private school choice. His public endorsement of school choice was a smart political decision. The latest Morning Consult polling shows that 77% of Pennsylvania parents with children in school support education savings accounts.

Mr. Shapiro attended private schools, as do his children. By supporting the expansion of options for less-advantaged families, he was able to pre-empt Republican accusations of school choice hypocrisy. Pennsylvania parents are also already accustomed to school choice. More than 60,000 state scholarships are awarded to K-12 students to attend private schools in the state each year.⁶¹

Mr. Shapiro wasn’t the only prominent Democrat to come out in support of school choice recently. Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker, a Democrat, answered a candidate survey just a few weeks before the 2022 gubernatorial election indicating support for a private school choice program that he previously vowed to eliminate.⁶² This year, Mr. Pritzker said he would sign a private school choice bill benefiting low-income families if the legislature delivered it to his desk.⁶³ Two Democratic Representatives – one from North Carolina⁶⁴ and one from Georgia⁶⁵ – switched to the Republican Party largely because of their support for school choice.

⁵⁸ Parents are the new electoral power players. Washington Examiner. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/community-family/parents-are-the-new-electoral-power-players>

⁵⁹ NSBA concludes review of letter asking Biden’s DOJ to investigate parents under ‘domestic terrorism’ laws. Fox News. Retrieved from <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/nsba-biden-justice-parents-domestic-terrorists>

⁶⁰ State associations leave NSBA following letter to President Biden (2021-2022). Ballotpedia. Retrieved from https://ballotpedia.org/National_School_Boards_Association

⁶¹ Democrat Josh Shapiro Defects on School Choice. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-democrat-defects-on-school-choice-josh-shapiro-pennsylvania-lifeline-scholarship-education-savings-account-teachers-union-election-11663615562>

⁶² Gov. Pritzker Flips on School Choice. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/school-choice-jd-pritzker-gubernatorial-governor-race-election-illinois-charter-public-funding-teachers-unions-11666185999>

⁶³ Gov. J.B. Pritzker says he’ll agree to extend a tax credit program for private school scholarships if legislators send him a proposal. Chicago Tribune. Retrieved from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/politics/elections/ct-pritzker-private-school-tax-credit-20231019-wjff5e56mnefdai5xhtgts2lvi-story.html>

⁶⁴ Education Freedom in North Carolina. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/education-freedom-in-north-carolina-public-schools-democratic-party-switch-cotham-choice-universal-7b9a3a8>

⁶⁵ School choice Georgia Republican on leaving Democratic Party: Policies weren’t ‘benefiting people of color’. Fox News. Retrieved from <https://www.foxnews.com/media/school-choice-georgia-republican-leaving-democratic-party-policies-benefiting-people-color>

The political winds have shifted. Just ask *The New Yorker*, where the author lamented that “education freedom” candidates “fared depressingly well” in the midterms.⁶⁶ Left-leaning Vox author also admitted that school choice has largely become “a litmus test issue for Republicans.”

For far too long in K-12 education, the only special interests represented the employees – the adults – in the system. But now, the kids have a union of their own: their parents. It’s time for politicians to listen to them – and free families from the clutches of the teachers unions once and for all.

⁶⁶ How “Education Freedom” Played in the Midterms. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/how-education-freedom-played-in-the-midterms>

Scientific Evidence of Private School Choice

The best evidence that school choice “works” is the satisfaction of the beneficiaries of the funding – the students and their families. Almost all – 31 of the 33 existing studies on the topic – find that private school choice is associated with higher levels of parent satisfaction.⁶⁷ Eight random assignment studies have found that winning the lottery to use a private school choice program had large positive effects on satisfaction for parents or students.

For example, Howell and Peterson (2002) found that the nationwide Children’s Scholarship Fund increased parent satisfaction by 95% of a standard deviation, and Kisida and Wolf (2015) found that the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program increased the average grade that parents assigned to their child’s school by over a third of a standard deviation.⁶⁸ The latest federal evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program found that winning a lottery to attend a private school increased students’ reports of satisfaction by 18% after three years, with average scholarship amounts valued at only about a third of the amount the D.C. public schools spent per student.⁶⁹

A peer-reviewed review⁷⁰ of the evidence from 2017 found 19 studies on the topic and concluded that “Results of all these studies show parents who can choose private schools are more satisfied with their child’s school. These studies also find higher levels of satisfaction when comparing choice parents to public school parents.” Similarly, my peer-reviewed evaluation⁷¹ from 2022, using a nationally representative sample, found that, all else equal, “public charter schools and private schools outperform traditional public schools on six measures of parent and student satisfaction.”

My peer-reviewed review⁷² of the evidence, coauthored with Jude Schwalbach, found that “Eight of the nine studies of public charter schools, and each of the eleven studies of private schools, found positive effects on school safety relative to district-run public schools.” For example, Wolf et al. (2010) found that winning a lottery and using a voucher to attend a private school in D.C. increased parents’ reports of school climate by 17% of a standard deviation.⁷³

All six peer-reviewed studies on the topic find that school choice reduces crime. For example, a study by researchers at Harvard and Princeton found that winning a lottery to attend a charter school in New York City reduced the likelihood of incarceration for male students by 100%.⁷⁴ Indeed, winning a lottery to attend a charter school in NYC all-but eliminated the chance of incarceration for male students in the sample. The

⁶⁷ The 123s of School Choice. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123s-of-school-choice-2/>

⁶⁸ Kisida, B., & Wolf, P. J. (2015). Customer satisfaction and educational outcomes: Experimental impacts of the market-based delivery of public education. *International Public Management Journal*, 18(2), 265-285.

⁶⁹ School choice works — for a third of the cost. Washington Examiner. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/school-choice-works-for-a-third-of-the-cost>

⁷⁰ Rhinesmith, E. (2017). A review of the research on parent satisfaction in private school choice programs. *Journal of School Choice*, 11(4), 585-603. Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15582159.2017.1395639?casa_token=abCBUTvEvA0AAAAA%3ATE7uB7gM-bY0bINkT_AjKdi4zWuJyXRwUCwRbheozL3sJelgIRx90B-GQmVTNT3Q345_76TDwjG4

⁷¹ DeAngelis, C. A. (2022). School sector and satisfaction: evidence from a nationally representative sample. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 33(2), 218-235. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09243453.2021.1993275>

⁷² Schwalbach, J., & DeAngelis, C. A. (2022). School sector and school safety: A review of the evidence. *Educational Review*, 74(4), 882-898. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00131911.2020.1822789>

⁷³ Wolf, P., Gutmann, B., Puma, M., Kisida, B., Rizzo, L., Eissa, N., & Carr, M. (2010). Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Final Report. NCEE 2010-4018. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED510451>

⁷⁴ Dobbie, W., & Fryer Jr, R. G. (2015). The medium-term impacts of high-achieving charter schools. *Journal of Political Economy*, 123(5), 985-1037. Retrieved from <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/682718>

study also found that winning a charter school lottery reduced reports of teen pregnancy by 59% for female students.

Another study published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* found that winning a lottery to attend a public school of choice cut crime in half, a 50% reduction, for high-risk male students in Charlotte, North Carolina.⁷⁵

Both of my peer-reviewed evaluations on the subject, coauthored with University of Arkansas Professor Patrick J. Wolf, found large positive effects of private school choice in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on crime reduction later in life.⁷⁶ Our latest study⁷⁷ found that “exposure to the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program is associated with a reduction of around 53 percent in drug convictions, 86 percent in property damage convictions, and 38 percent in paternity suits.” My peer-reviewed study⁷⁸ with Western Carolina University’s Angela K. Dills found that “states adopting charter school laws witness declines in adolescent suicides” and that “private schooling reduces the likelihood that individuals report having mental health issues as adults.”

Five out of the seven studies on the topic find that private school choice improves educational attainment.⁷⁹ For example, a peer-reviewed evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program found that winning a lottery to attend a private school increased the likelihood of graduating high school by 21 percentage points.⁸⁰ An evaluation of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program found⁸¹ that program participation “increases the likelihood that students earn a bachelor’s degree, with average increases of 1 to 2 percentage points (10 to 20 percent).”

EdChoice’s review of the evidence found that a majority of the 11 studies on the topic found that private school choice improves students’ civic values and practices. None of the 11 studies found negative effects.⁸² My peer-reviewed review of this evidence similarly concluded that all 11 existing studies on the topic found null to positive effects of private school choice on civic outcomes.⁸³ Dr. Patrick J. Wolf’s review⁸⁴ of 21 studies on the topic similarly found that “the effect of private schooling or school choice on civic values is most often neutral or positive.” For example, an evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship program

⁷⁵ Deming, D. J. (2011). Better schools, less crime? *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126(4), 2063-2115. Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/qje/article-abstract/126/4/2063/1922935>

⁷⁶ DeAngelis, C. A., & Wolf, P. J. (2019). Private school choice and crime: Evidence from Milwaukee. *Social Science Quarterly*, 100(6), 2302-2315. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ssqu.12698>

⁷⁷ DeAngelis, C. A., & Wolf, P. J. (2020). Private School Choice and Character: More Evidence from Milwaukee. *The Journal of Private Enterprise*, 35(3), 13-48. Retrieved from https://journal.apee.org/index.php/Parte3_2020_Journal_of_Private_Enterprise_Vol_35_No_3_Fall

⁷⁸ DeAngelis, C. A., & Dills, A. K. (2021). The effects of school choice on mental health. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 32(2), 326-344. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09243453.2020.1846569>

⁷⁹ The 123s of School Choice. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123s-of-school-choice-2/>

⁸⁰ Wolf, P. J., Kisida, B., Gutmann, B., Puma, M., Eissa, N., & Rizzo, L. (2013). School Vouchers and Student Outcomes: Experimental Evidence from Washington, DC. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 32(2), 246-270. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/pam.21691>

⁸¹ Chingos, M. M., Monarrez, T. E., & Kuehn, D. (2019). The effects of the Florida tax credit scholarship program on college enrollment and graduation: An update. Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/effects-florida-tax-credit-scholarship-program-college-enrollment-and-graduation>

⁸² The 123s of School Choice. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123s-of-school-choice-2/>

⁸³ DeAngelis, C. A. (2017). Do self-interested schooling selections improve society? A review of the evidence. *Journal of School Choice*, 11(4), 546-558. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15582159.2017.1395615>

⁸⁴ Wolf, P. J. (2007). Civics exam schools of choice boost civic values. *Education Next*, 7(3), 66. Retrieved from <https://www.educationnext.org/civics-exam/>

found that winning a lottery to attend a private school increased tolerance levels between 6.7 and 8.2 percentage points.⁸⁵

Sixty-eight of 73 evaluations on the topic find that private school choice programs save taxpayer money. Seven out of 8 evaluations on the topic have find that private school choice programs lead to racial integration.⁸⁶ Most random assignment evaluations of private school choice programs find statistically significant positive effects on standardized test scores overall or for student subgroups.

Twenty-six of 29 existing studies on the topic find that private school choice competition improves outcomes in public schools.⁸⁷ The most recent peer-reviewed meta-analysis on the subject, published in 2022, similarly found overall positive effects of school choice competition on outcomes in public schools.⁸⁸ A peer-reviewed study⁸⁹ from 2023 also found that “more education freedom is significantly associated with increased National Assessment of Education Progress scores and gains, supporting the claim that choice and competition improves system-wide achievement.” School choice is a rising tide that lifts all boats.⁹⁰

Competition in the market for goods and services benefits consumers: parents and their children. Competition in the labor market benefits employees. The one-size-fits-all government-run school system is a monopoly that has little incentive to spend additional funding wisely. In the same way, the government-run school system is a monopsony in the labor market: educators who wish to work in an elementary or secondary school setting do not have a lot of options other than the government school system.

Lack of choice for employees and little incentive to spend money wisely on the part of the employers both lead to a lack of autonomy and stagnated salaries for teachers. National Center for Education Statistics data show that inflation-adjusted U.S. public school funding per student increased by 152 percent between 1970 and 2019. Public school teacher salaries, on the other hand, only increased by about 8 percent. The money is there, but it’s not making its way into the classroom (Appendix Figure 1).

The money is going towards administrative bloat and staffing surges. Between 1950 and 2015, the number of teachers in the public school system increased 2.4 times as much as the number of students, whereas the number of administrators and all other staff increased more than 7 times as much as the number of students. Between 1992 and 2014, per student funding increased by 27 percent in real terms, whereas average teacher salaries dropped by 2 percent. The number of teachers in the public school system increased by 28 percent and the number of administrators and all other staff increased by 45 percent.⁹¹ More recently, between 2000 and 2019, the number of student and teachers in the public school system increased by about 8 percent,

⁸⁵ Wolf, P., Peterson, P. E., & West, M. R. (2001). Results of a school voucher experiment: The case of Washington, DC after two years. *DC After Two Years*. Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=313822

⁸⁶ The 123s of School Choice. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123s-of-school-choice-2/>

⁸⁷ The 123s of School Choice. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/research-library/?report=the-123s-of-school-choice-2/>

⁸⁸ Jabbar, H., Fong, C. J., Germain, E., Li, D., Sanchez, J., Sun, W. L., & Devall, M. (2022). The competitive effects of school choice on student achievement: A systematic review. *Educational Policy*, *36*(2), 247-281. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0895904819874756?journalCode=cpxa>

⁸⁹ Wolf, P. J., Greene, J. P., Paul, J. D., & Ladner, M. (2023). Education Freedom and Student Achievement: Is More School Choice Associated with Higher State-Level Performance on the NAEP? *Journal of School Choice*. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15582159.2023.2183450>

⁹⁰ Wolf, P. J., Greene, J. P., Paul, J. D., & Ladner, M. (2023). Education Freedom and Student Achievement: Is More School Choice Associated with Higher State-Level Performance on the NAEP? *Journal of School Choice*. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15582159.2023.2183450>

⁹¹ Scafidi, B. (2017). Back to the Staffing Surge: The Great Teacher Salary Stagnation and the Decades-Long Employment Growth in American Public Schools. EdChoice. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED583004>

whereas the number of principals and assistant principals increased by 37 percent and the number of administrative staff increased by 88 percent (Appendix Figure 2).

Five studies on the topic each find that school choice competition leads to higher teacher salaries in public schools.⁹²

⁹² School choice benefits teachers too. Washington Examiner. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/school-choice-benefits-teachers-too>

Appendix Figures and Tables

Figure 1

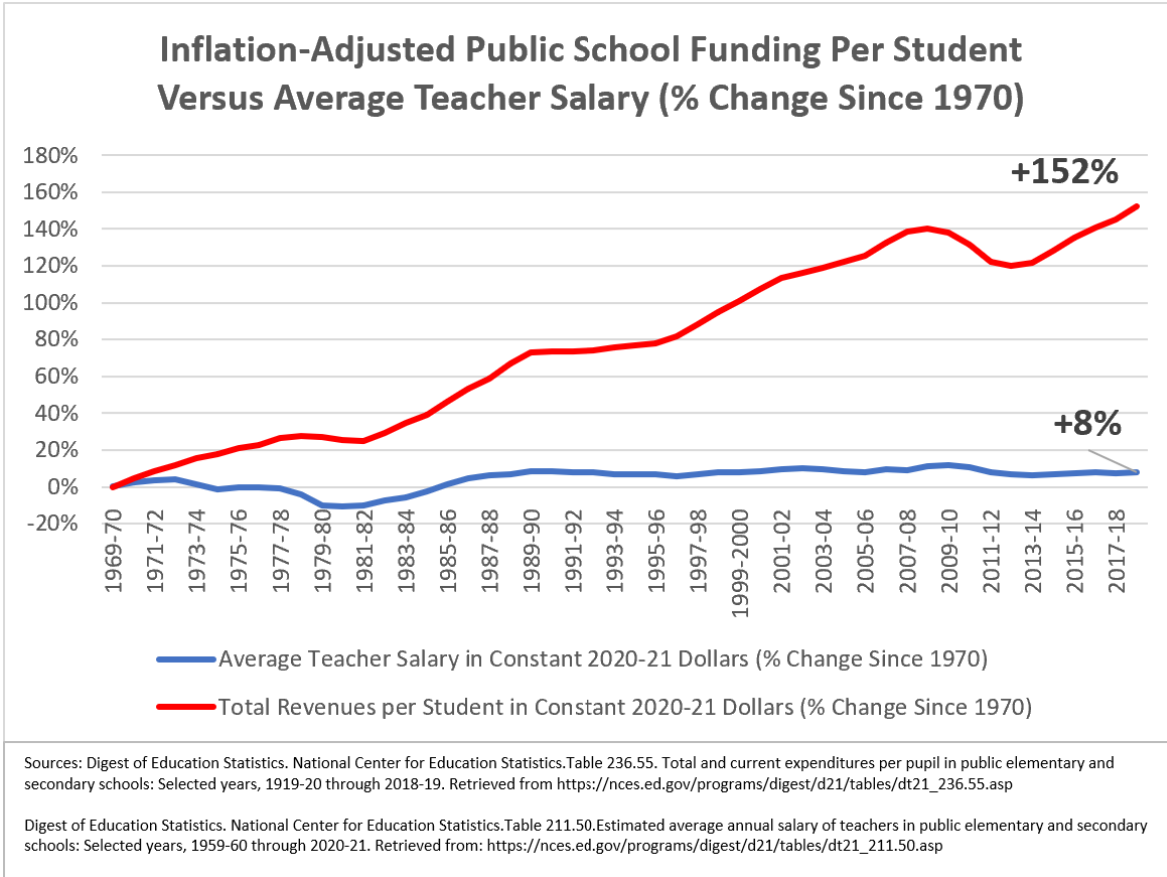


Figure 2

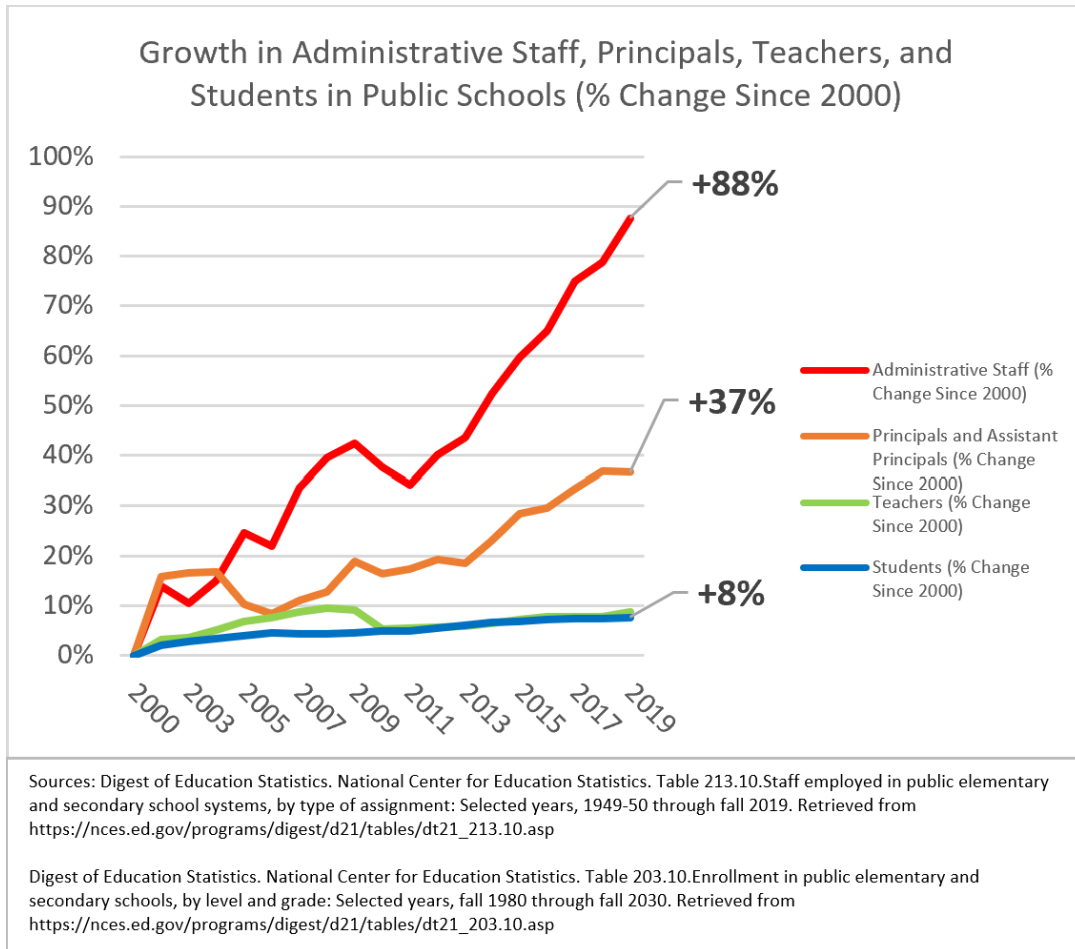


Table 1: Campaign contributions from the American Federation of Teachers to Democrats:⁹³

Year	Percentage
1994:	99.4%
1996:	99.1%
1998:	98.9%
2000:	99.2%
2002:	99.3%
2004:	98.0%
2006:	99.1%
2008:	99.1%
2010:	99.4%
2012:	99.4%
2014:	99.0%
2016:	99.7%
2018:	99.8%
2020:	99.6%
2022:	99.97%

⁹³ American Federation of Teachers. OpenSecrets. Retrieved from <https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/american-federation-of-teachers/totals?id=d000000083>