

United States Senate

March 8, 2017

The Honorable Dan Huberty
Texas State House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Chairman Huberty,

There is no political, social, policy or moral excuse for delaying what Florida, Arizona, Indiana, Nevada and many other states have already done. Pass a school choice program now that allows parents to design an education that is best for their children.

Governor Abbott and Lt. Governor Patrick have strongly endorsed education savings accounts, and we are confident that it will pass the Texas Senate. My purpose is to let you know that I strongly support school choice, specifically ESAs, and intend to continue to speak out on behalf of private school choice in Texas. I urge you to stand with the children of Texas and against the entrenched special interests that are trying to deny Texas children and their parents the freedom to decide how their education money is spent.

As you are aware, 84% of the 2012 primary voters in the Texas Republican Primary supported allowing every Texas child to take the money that is being spent on their behalf in public schools and use that money to attend private schools, parochial schools or some education program that better fits his or her needs. Study after study confirms school choice works. Competition will also improve public education, and, in fact, where school choice exists, the quality of public education improves.

The *Washington Post* recently reported a study by the Obama Department of Education that concluded that President Obama's much touted education enrichment program had been a total failure despite billions more being spent in the hope of improving public schools. As reported in the *Post* on January 19:

Test scores, graduation rates and college enrollment were no different in schools that received money through the School Improvement Grants program — the largest federal investment ever targeted to failing schools — than in schools that did not.

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Meaningful reform of Texas' public education system will be multifaceted, but it must have decentralization and choice at its core. Questions of school funding must be secondary to the reforms, like choice, that are actually necessary to improve student performance and academic outcomes.

Promoting education choice isn't about demeaning the public school system. It isn't about criticizing government schools, or their administrators and teachers. It's about giving families the choice over the type of place they want to educate their children and grandchildren. It's an approach that honors, respects and fosters liberty wherever and whenever we can.

Ultimately, this debate is whether or not we believe in Article I Sec. 2 of the State Constitution which reads: "All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit."

No parent should be taxed to support a system of schools then told where their child must go to school, even if that school fails. That's not a government "instituted for their benefit." Instead, it's a government determined to maintain a near-monopoly on education, no matter its quality.

Education choice works, and it will work in Texas. Step forward to make Texas a leader again in education by fighting for liberty.

Thank you for reading this letter. There is no issue being debated in America today that is more important than school choice. It's time for school choice in Texas.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
United States Senator