



Do Texas parents deserve a more meaningful role in their children’s education by being able to choose what school will get to educate their child?

TEXAS LAWMAKERS:

Each school year, most Texas parents have only one choice of school if they want their property tax dollars to cover their child’s education: the local public school assigned to them. This is true regardless of whether that school is actually meeting the needs of their child. As of 2015, this “single-option” approach to K-12 education has been rejected by nearly half the states in America.

A total of 24 states and the District of Columbia have passed school choice programs that give parents a greater role in choosing the right education for their children.

Texas parents begin each school year without that same freedom. As Governor Abbott correctly observed during his State of the State address: “Real local control rests with parents. The ultimate parental involvement is giving parents more choices in their child’s education.”

The undersigned organizations represent hundreds of thousands of Texas citizens. They now ask you to support school choice reforms that offer meaningful educational options for your constituents.

ALL EYES ARE NOW ON TEXAS

The question is simple: Do Texas parents deserve a more meaningful role in their children’s education by being able to choose, on a voluntary basis, the school that will educate their child? With an eye towards the battle-tested school choice programs from across the country, Texas is now uniquely positioned to answer this question during the 84th Legislature.

Two parental school choice programs have been introduced this session— SB 276 (“Taxpayer Savings Grants”) and HB 1043 & SB 642 (“Tax Credit Scholarships”).

COALITION MEMBERS:

- Americans for Prosperity
- Institute for Justice
- Empower Texans
- Texas Public Policy Foundation
- Texas Public Policy Action
- Lt. Governor Grassroots Advisory Board
- Heartland Institute
- Texans for Parental Choice in Education
- Grassroots America – We the People
- Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- San Antonio Coalition for School Choice
- Concerned Women for America of Texas
- Texas Leadership Institute for Public Advocacy
- New Life Christian Academy
- New Life Christian Ministry
- National Center for Policy Analysis
- Kingwood TEA Party, Inc.
- Texas Home School Coalition
- Texas Values Action
- Texas Pastor Council



"Real local control rests with parents. The ultimate parental involvement is giving parents more choices in their child's education."

- Governor Abbott

TAXPAYER SAVINGS GRANTS | SB 276

Taxpayer Savings Grants (TSG) would provide all Texas parents with a voluntary, statewide educational option that allows them to enroll children in the school of their choice.

TSGs help parents afford the tuition at a private school if a parent chooses this option. Because the amount of the grant cannot exceed 60% of the per-student average school operating expenditure in Texas, the remaining funds result in net savings for the state. According to the Legislative Budget Board in 2013, TSGs will save taxpayers \$1.1 billion over five years.

TSGs also increase local accountability with K-12 education. Parents would now be able to remove their children from an underperforming school and instead enroll them at a school that meets their children's needs. Greater competition will incentivize school districts to re-allocate more of their resources to the classroom, with a focus on students.

TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS | HB 1043 & SB 642

Tax Credit Scholarships provide the availability of a business tax credit (franchise or insurance premium tax liability) to businesses that donate scholarship funds to 501(c)(3) Educational Assistance Organizations ("EAO"), certified by the Comptroller. An EAO then uses those funds to provide parents of low-income students, in medium-to-large Texas cities, with scholarships to help them afford sending their child to a school of their choice. Tax Credit Scholarships incorporate the very best features from proven tax-credit scholarship programs in Arizona, Indiana, and Florida.

IT IS TIME TO EMPOWER PARENTS

When parents are given the ability to select the best school for their child, their choices act as a check against the "single-option" approach to K-12 education. While the education status quo reflexively asks for more funding each session, they all too often do so while also asking that parents and kids have fewer educational options. That is not only unfair, but it puts parents and kids on the outside looking in, and treats K-12 education as if it were a lottery. To the lottery losers, the response is "we will do better next year if you give us more money." This is unacceptable for parents and children who need help today, not in some perpetually hypothetical future.

Incredibly strong majorities of Texas primary voters have demanded school choice. In state supreme courts across the country, school choice programs are being upheld in state after state when they are challenged by those seeking to preserve the status quo. Each time, parents have intervened in these cases to successfully defend school choice reforms. Texas parents will do the same.

We ask that you return to your district this year with new educational options for your constituents, ones that empower Texas parents to send their children to the schools that work best for their families.

Sincerely,

/s/ Peggy Venable
Texas State Director
Americans for Prosperity

/s/ Matt Miller
Managing Attorney
Institute for Justice

/s/ Michael Quinn Sullivan
President
Empower Texans

/s/ Kent Grusendorf
Director-Center for Education Freedom
Texas Public Policy Foundation

/s/ Nathanael Ferguson
Executive Director
Texas Public Policy Action

/s/ Jonathan Saenz
President
Texas Values Action

AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY
TEXAS

INSTITUTE
for JUSTICE



EMPOWERTEXANS



TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY
ACTION



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/s/ JoAnn Fleming
Chair
Lt. Governor Grassroots Advisory Board

/s/ Jeff Judson
Director and Senior Fellow
Heartland Institute

/s/ Robert Schoolfield
President
Texans for Parental Choice in Education

/s/ JoAnn Fleming
Executive Director
Grassroots America – We the People

/s/ Rev. Kyev Tatum
President
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

/s/ Alejandro Calderon
President and Co-Founder
San Antonio Coalition for School Choice

/s/ Ann Hettinger
State Director
Concerned Women for America of Texas

/s/ Philip Sevilla
President
Texas Leadership Institute for Public Advocacy

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Board Member
New Life Christian Academy

/s/ Dr. LaSalle R. Vaughn
Founder and President
New Life Christian Ministry

/s/ Hon. Allen B. West
President and CEO
National Center for Policy Analysis

/s/ Robin H. Lennon
President and Co-Founder
Kingwood TEA Party, Inc.

/s/ Jeremy Newman
Director of Public Policy
Texas Home School Coalition

/s/ Rev. Dave Welch
Executive Director
Texas Pastor Council

San Antonio Coalition



For School Choice

