

## STRATEGY MEMO



**TO:** CONSERVATIVE LEADERS & CLUB FOR GROWTH DONORS

**FROM:** DAVID McINTOSH, PRESIDENT, CLUB FOR GROWTH

**DATE:** THURSDAY, MARCH 18

**SUBJECT:** STRATEGY MEMO - MOVING THE NEEDLE ON PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE

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Too many public schools are failing American families, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made that even more apparent with the ongoing unnecessary school closures. More than ever before, parents are demanding change.

That's why conservatives and conservative organizations across the country including Club for Growth, Club for Growth PAC, and Club for Growth Action (collectively referred to as "Club for Growth") have made parental school choice a top priority. Club for Growth believes education funding should follow students not bureaucrats, and we are looking for federal and state opportunities to enact meaningful legislation and elect champions of the policy.

The following briefing provides a summary of the latest on the politics and policy around parental school choice, and what Club for Growth is doing on the issue including the four television advertisements that will run beginning Sunday.

### **PARENTAL CHOICE & THE RECENT U.S. SENATE VOTE**

Club for Growth believes that federal dollars should follow students and parents, not educational institutions and bureaucrats. We believe this approach will greatly improve parental choice in education, improve educational opportunities for students, and ensure that educational bureaucrats stop playing a game of political chicken at the expense of students' education.

Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) recently introduced an amendment in the Senate that would do just that—allow our taxpayer dollars to fund students and not systems.

The amendment came up just short, with 49 Republicans voting in favor and all 50 Democrats voting against. This was a historic vote and put every Republican on the record in supporting parental choice in education. If it weren't for the Democrats' rank partisanship and blind loyalty to education bureaucrats, parents would have been empowered to choose the educational option that is best for their children.

Sen. Cruz's amendment would have also provided children with an option for in-classroom instruction if the child's local public school failed to commit to reopening in-person, five-days-a-week. It would have helped accommodate a safe re-opening of schools and a return to in-person education by requiring schools to submit a re-opening plan.

Club for Growth is encouraged by the close vote in the Senate and will continue to encourage Congress to deliver parental choice in K-12 education so our nation's students can get the education they deserve.

## FOUR NEW ADS

This Sunday, four new Club for Growth issue ads will run in four different states, Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, and New Hampshire. The ads highlight the recent votes against Cruz's amendment #969 by Senators Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Mark Kelly (D-AZ), Raphael Warnock (D-GA), and will run during Sunday shows with a \$45,554 media buy.

- » [Click here](#) to watch the Arizona ad highlighting Sen. Kelly's vote against parental school choice.
- » [Click here](#) to watch the Georgia ad highlighting Sen. Warnock's vote against parental school choice.
- » [Click here](#) to watch the Nevada ad highlighting Sen. Cortez Masto's vote against parental school choice.
- » [Click here](#) to watch the New Hampshire ad highlighting Sen. Hassan's vote against parental school choice.

Their constituents deserve to know that they are putting self-interested bureaucrats ahead of our children, and we're going to continue to call out their failed leadership and hypocrisy in these four states and elsewhere.

## STATE PARENTAL CHOICE LEGISLATION

Numerous state legislatures are considering diverse parental choice bills. Club for Growth has recently spoken out in support of parental choice legislation and efforts in:

- » **Arizona**
- » **Georgia**
- » **Indiana**
- » **Iowa**
- » **More to come...**

Club for Growth recently ran an ad supporting parental choice in Iowa, [click here](#) to watch the ad. Club for Growth Action also recently ran a television ad in California calling out Gov. Newsom and education bureaucrats for their poor judgement and hypocrisy, [click here](#) to watch the ad.

## SUMMARY OF WORK

- » [Click here](#) to read the Club for Growth Key Vote Alert on Cruz's amendment #969 to H.R. 1319.
- » [Click here](#) to read David McIntosh's recent OpEd in The Washington Times.
- » [Click here](#) to read Club for Growth's memo on Emergency Parental Choice Grants.
- » [Click here](#) to read select past press coverage of Club for Growth leading the push for parental choice.

## WHAT'S NEXT

- » Find and elect champions of parental choice
- » Hold opposing officials accountable
- » Support bold and diverse state legislation in the short-term
- » Prepare for federal legislation in the long-term

## GET THE FACTS ON PARENTAL SCHOOL CHOICE

- » Millions of parents across the country have been able to provide a better future for their children thanks to parental choice programs in education.
  - ✓ Recent polling shows that two-thirds of all K-12 parents support parental choice in education, as well as more than 70 percent of African American and Latino parents.
  - ✓ As states have worked to increase educational opportunity for students, public charter school enrollment has [grown](#) from 448,000 in 2000 to over 3 million in 2016.
  - ✓ Surveys [show](#) parent satisfaction with their child's school ranks significantly higher among those utilizing parental choice programs.
- » **Parental choice has proven to have a real impact on students' achievement and deliver greater opportunity for success.**
  - ✓ Out of 18 randomized [studies](#) of parental choice outcomes, 14 found positive effects on the academic outcomes of students.
  - ✓ A [study](#) examining Florida's tax credit scholarship program found that students who joined the program in high school were 19% more likely to attend college.
  - ✓ Students enrolled in Milwaukee's parental choice program were significantly more likely to later enroll in a four-year university, [according](#) to one study.
  - ✓ A 2010 [study](#) of Washington D.C.'s Opportunity Scholarship Program found that students using the voucher program had a graduation rate of over 90%, compared to 70% for

students in the city not using the program.

- » **Parental choice programs have demonstrated that they can help improve outcomes for everyone and provide students with an education that best fits their needs.**
  - ✓ In Florida, a voucher program helped disabled students attend private schools that could meet their needs while also **improving** outcomes for disabled students who remained in public schools.
- » **Parental choice programs deliver savings for taxpayers while delivering better outcomes for students.**
  - ✓ Out of 28 empirical **studies** on parental choice programs, 25 found they save money and three found they are revenue neutral.
- » **For many students, parental choice offers the opportunity for a safer environment that fosters learning.**
  - ✓ A national **survey** of students found a gang presence was much more common at public schools than at private schools.

## STUDENTS DESERVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

- » **For decades, taxpayers have seen education costs soar as student performance and outcomes see little improvement, stagnate, or even drop.**
- » **Per student **spending** has skyrocketed by 130% in inflation adjusted dollars since 1970, with the United States spending over \$15,000 per student in 2016-2017.**
  - ✓ From 1977 to 2015, K-12 education was the single **largest** general expenditure for State and Local governments.
  - ✓ In 2017, K-12 education **composed** over one-fifth of all state and local general expenditures.
- » **Even as spending has soared, performance has been stagnant or even dropped in some cases.**
  - ✓ According to the **National Assessment of Educational Progress**, performance among students has seen little improvement since the 1970s, even as per student spending rose significantly.
- » **Today, our schools have seen American students consistently **rank** far below other major countries in educational performance.**
  - ✓ In mathematics, U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> grade students rank 41<sup>st</sup> in math proficiency compared to other nations, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students rank 34<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students rank 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - ✓ In reading, U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> grade students rank 35<sup>th</sup> in reading proficiency compared to other nations, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students rank 34<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students rank 37<sup>th</sup>.

- ✓ In science, U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> grade students rank 38<sup>th</sup> in science proficiency compared to other nations, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students rank 34<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students rank 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## **PUBLIC SCHOOLS FAILED US DURING COVID-19**

- » **As teachers' unions and some public officials have failed students in their response to the pandemic, families are turning to parental choice to ensure their child gets a quality education.**
  - ✓ States across the country are **experiencing** increased momentum for parental choice in education in response to the failures we have seen during the pandemic.
- » **Despite the science showing it would be safe to reopen schools, billions in dedicated funding, and teachers being prioritized for vaccinations, teachers' unions are keeping schools across the country shut down.**
  - ✓ In Fairfax County, VA, teachers were **prioritized** for vaccinations only for the unions to later say they could not return until at least Fall 2021, even after teachers were vaccinated.
  - ✓ In California, teachers' unions continue to **fight** to keep schools shut down despite safety measures.
- » **The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown that teachers' unions interests are not aligned with what is best for students.**
  - ✓ While those on the left demand more COVID-19 funding for education, more than \$50 billion in education funding from the CARES Act is **estimated** to still be unspent.

While they claim there needs to be more funding to help open up schools this year, 95% of the **funding** in Democrats' stimulus bill wouldn't even be given to schools until after 2021