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“The future and success of America is not in this Constitution, but in the laws of God upon which this Constitution is founded.”
James Madison

Arizona School Choice Measure on November ballot

Voters in Arizona will have the opportunity this November to expand school choice for all students in the state. On the ballot is a measure, [Proposition 305](#), which would uphold Senate Bill 1431, a bill which was passed in 2017 to expand the state’s education savings account (ESA) program. The [Empowerment Scholarship Account](#) program was originally established in 2011 to provide funds to students with disabilities to cover multiple educational services such as private school tuition, online classes, tutoring, and therapy. The program provided the parents with a debit card that they could use to access up to 90% of the state-allotted funds for their child and use the money for their child’s educational needs. Over the years, the program was expanded to include children attending failing public schools, children from tribal lands, and children from military families. The program has grown from 144 participating students the first year to over 5,000 students for this 2018–19 school year. Last year, the state legislature passed [legislation](#) which was signed into law by the governor to expand the program so that all students will be eligible to use ESAs for their education. The program was slated to follow a gradual expansion each year, with students in grades 1, 6, and 9 eligible to participate the first year (2017–18), adding grades 2, 7, and 10 the second year, then grades 3, 8, and 11 the third year, with all students eligible for ESAs by the 2020–2021 school year. However, despite the popularity and support of the program, opponents of school choice started a campaign to stop the progress, garnering enough signatures to place the measure on the ballot for a vote by the people of Arizona. Save Our Schools Arizona, the organization leading the opposition to the bill, claims that expanding the program will take money away from public schools. However, conservatives and supporters of the choice program point to the [opportunities and educational benefits](#) that the program provides to students and families. A recent poll showed favorable support for expansion, with 41% of responders supporting the expansion of ESAs, 32% opposing, and 17% still undecided. Should the people of Arizona pass the measure, the program would become the largest ESA program in the country.

ABC’s of School Choice Guidebook Released

The American Federation of Children has released the [2017–2018 School Choice Guidebook](#), an annual publication that offers information regarding school choice programs across the country. The data shows that there are 500,000 students in 54 school choice programs across the country, a tremendous growth from only one program in 1990. Since 2000, the number of students benefiting from school choice programs has grown from 29,000 to approximately 500,000. Currently, there are choice programs offered in 26 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These programs include 24 voucher programs in 12 states, 22 tax credit programs in 18 states, and 6 education savings account programs in 6 states. The guidebook breaks down the information by state, outlining the details for each program such as funding resources and requirements for student

eligibility and school participation. The guidebook also offers information regarding research and the effectiveness of various programs. The guidebook is intended to be a resource to aid families looking for information on school choice programs in their state, and also to aid in the advancement of school choice programs across the country. The free book is available through [download](#) or by [requesting a hard copy](#).

American Pastor Freed After Two Years in Turkish Prison

President Trump welcomed American missionary pastor Andrew Brunson to the Oval Office following Mr. Brunson's release after spending two years in prison in Turkey. The Brunson family had been ministering in Turkey for over 20 years when he was arrested during a routine visit for some official paperwork. He was detained for the next two years without any explanation as to the charges against him. After a contentious court hearing in Turkey last Friday, the Turkish court lifted the travel ban and house arrest for him, and issued a small prison sentence, which included the time served during the last two years. U.S. officials took the opportunity to get him out of the country and back to America. During the President's [welcoming meeting](#), he praised the work of the Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and several members of Congress (from both sides of the aisle) to advocate for Brunson's release. Mr. Brunson took the opportunity [to pray for](#) the President, and Rep. Mark Meadows (NC) [applauded](#) the administration's efforts on Mr. Brunson's behalf: "Sometimes administrations are not willing to put the full force of the United States government in diplomatic negotiations. And yet this president and this administration did so. . . . He deserves an unbelievable gratitude—not just from Republicans and Democrats or unaffiliated—but for those who believe in religious liberty."

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[School Choice Victory in Maine](#)

[Restoring Religious Liberty by Restoring the Original Meaning of the Establishment Clause](#)

[Report Shows Fiscal Benefits of Tax Credit Scholarship Programs](#)

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