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"To the kindly influence of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoys. All efforts made to destroy the foundations of our Holy Religion ultimately tend to the subversion also of our political freedom and happiness."
Jedidiah Morse

Oregon Elementary School Faces Tragedy

The AACCS offers its deepest sympathies to the community of Silver Rail Elementary School in Bend, Oregon, in the [tragic loss](#) of three students and a teacher who were killed when an armed 16-year-old shot through the locked doors and entered the school. The shooter was tackled by a female teacher and then subsequently killed by an armed father, who has two daughters at the school and ran into the school to stop the shooter. A fourth student and another teacher were wounded in the attack. Our prayers are with the families of the victims and the entire community as they mourn this devastating loss.

Several resources are available to aid schools in implementing the best policies and programs to ensure school safety: A [Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety](#), released during the Trump administration, offers a compilation of best practices regarding training school personnel, strengthening building security, decreasing bullying, and developing a stronger awareness of mental health issues. The Heritage Foundation also offers the [School Safety Initiative](#), which provides policy solutions to limit these tragedies, including increasing school security, protecting Second Amendment rights, involving the community in young people's lives, addressing mental health issues, and building strong families and civil institutions.

New Report Shows Students with Disabilities Enroll in School Choice Programs

A recent [report](#) published by American Enterprise Institute shows that a significant number of students with disabilities are served by school choice programs, countering the argument by school choice opponents that choice programs leave students with disabilities behind. The report, authored by three analysts from [EdChoice](#), reveals that approximately 17.2% of students enrolled in school choice programs are students with disabilities, while around 15% of students enrolled in public schools are students with disabilities.

The report describes the "push" and "pull" factors that cause parents to seek educational options through school choice programs. The "push" refers to the bureaucracy that is associated with the programs and often hinders progress for the students, and the "pull" reflects the opportunity for greater parental influence in educational decisions for their children. The authors estimate that just under 180,000 students are enrolled in 18 different school choice programs created specifically for students with disabilities. They also note that this number could possibly be higher, as many choice programs with broader eligibility do not identify whether participating students have disabilities. "This seems to counter the narrative that students with disabilities are going to be left behind in these private school choice programs," [observed](#) EdChoice Senior Research Analyst John Kristoff. He further explained that "not only are there a bunch of programs specifically targeted to them . . . but even, in more broad-based school choice programs, quite a number of them participate."

In the report's conclusion, the authors pointed out that this report should dispel the argument that school choice programs do not help students with disabilities. "Critics predicted that, once private school choice was implemented on a large scale, students with disabilities would become highly concentrated in the public school system. That hasn't happened," the report [stated](#). "Students with disabilities are served in choice programs at a rate higher than that in the public school sector."

Court Rules Against Ohio School Choice Program, but Also Allows Program to Continue

The Ohio Court of Appeals has [ruled](#) that a school choice program called the EdChoice Program violates the state constitution. However, recognizing there will likely be an appeal, the same court also placed a stay on the decision to allow the families participating in the program to continue in their current education without disruption. The state legislature established the EdChoice Program in 2005 to help students in low-performing schools and then [expanded](#) the program in 2023 to allow universal participation, meaning applications are open to all students in the state. Opponents of the program charged that it is unconstitutional because it diverts money away from public schools and participating private schools are not held accountable like public schools. Ohio Attorney General Andy Wilson [released a statement](#) saying he plans to appeal the decision to the Ohio Supreme Court, and supporters of the program are hopeful that the appeal will uphold the constitutionality of the program. "We always knew it was going to go to the Ohio Supreme Court," [stated](#) Keith Neely an attorney for Institute for Justice, a nonprofit public interest law firm that is representing some of the families who participate in the EdChoice Program.

Notably, several [past court decisions](#) have upheld the constitutionality of school choice programs, including the ruling in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (1995), in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Cleveland's scholarship program did not violate the U.S. Constitution's Establishment Clause. Although the current legal challenge to the EdChoice Program differs from an Establishment Clause claim, supporters remain confident that the program will be upheld. "The Ohio Supreme Court long ago upheld private school choice under the Ohio Constitution, and we are confident it will do so again," [stated](#) Thomas Fisher, Executive Vice President and Litigation Director for EdChoice.

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[AI, America, and the Church](#)

[Christian Groups and Pastors Say New California LGBT Hate Speech Law Is Disguised as Indoctrination](#)

[Senator Tim Scott: School Choice Tax Credit Helps Families Unlock Academic Success](#)

[The Three C's: A Legal Strategy for Christian Ministries](#)