

LB753 - THE OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS ACT

MYTHS VS. REALITY

Those supporters of the petition effort will say a lot in order to gather as many signatures as possible. Unfortunately, they are spreading misinformation and misleading Nebraskans to accomplish their goal of stripping opportunity from Nebraska parents and kids. Here's the truth of the matter:

"LB753 TAKES MONEY FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS."

REALITY: Gov. Jim Pillen and the Nebraska Legislature overwhelmingly approved a state budget and education funding plan that:

- established a billion-dollar Education Future Fund;
- increased funding for public schools by more than \$300 million to record levels;
- funded a historic increase in state spending for students in special education; and,
- passed LB 753, the Opportunity Scholarships Act, to allow parents to choose the best education setting for their child.

This argument that LB 753, the Opportunity Scholarships Act, takes money from public schools rings especially hollow when opponents don't also criticize the newly passed child care tax credit or the phase-out of state income taxes on Social Security as taking money from public schools.

"LB753 VIOLATES SEPARATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE."

REALITY: The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that appropriately designed private school choice programs are fully constitutional. And numerous state courts have upheld the constitutionality of tax-credit scholarship programs.

"LB753 WILL HURT NEBRASKA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS."

REALITY: Public schools are an important part of Nebraska life, and, in many cases, they offer a quality education. But public schools are not an ideal fit for every child—parents deserve a choice. Why would giving parents a choice hurt kids? All students can learn, and we believe they should all have the opportunity to do so in a safe and supportive school, chosen by their parents, that meets their individual learning needs.

Studies consistently demonstrate public schools benefit from the existence of school choice programs. EdChoice reports 26 of 29 studies on the competitive effects of private school choice programs are positive.

<https://www.edchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/123s-of-School-Choice-WEB.pdf>

"STUDENTS WON'T BENEFIT FROM LB753."

REALITY: Thousands of Nebraska families stand to benefit when their student receives a scholarship to attend the education setting that best meets their needs. Parents deserve the right to send their child to a school that provides the best opportunity for an individual student's learning and that's what the Opportunity Scholarships Act is all about.

"NEBRASKA ALREADY HAS SCHOOL CHOICE."

REALITY: Some say Nebraska already has school choice with public option enrollment or because parents can "choose whatever school they want". However, many students are denied option enrollment by public schools and not every family has the means to pay private school tuition. While it's important families have access to option enrollment and alternative public schools, students and parents need expanded options. Currently schools, organizations and private groups work to offer as many scholarships as possible, but demand continues to exceed supply. Nebraska families deserve more opportunities for their children to thrive and succeed.

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MYTHS VS. REALITY (cont).

"PRIVATE SCHOOLS AREN'T HELD ACCOUNTABLE."

REALITY: All school choice programs have some level of administrative and financial accountability. And most programs have academic accountability. Private schools in every state must comply with health and safety regulations as well as anti-discrimination laws. Already in Nebraska, approved and accredited private schools have testing standards, health and safety standards, financial accountability standards, among other standards. And, in addition to all these requirements and regulations, private schools are accountable to those who matter the most: parents.

"PRIVATE SCHOOLS HAVE SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS POLICIES."

REALITY: Private schools often have classroom settings as diverse as traditional public schools. Not every school needs to meet the needs of every student. In fact, that isn't realistic. But what we do need is diverse schools all kids can access to meet their specific educational needs.

"PRIVATE SCHOOLS DON'T SERVE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS."

REALITY: Private schools are meeting the needs of a substantial number of students with special needs, and doing so without the funding mechanisms accessible to public schools. Education funding for students with special needs is complex, but it boils down to this: state and federal funding cannot follow a student to the school of their choice. This means all special needs education funding can only go to public schools. This places private schools at a disadvantage when educating children with special needs, especially those with the highest needs. Nevertheless, private schools are increasingly developing funding and programming to accept more children with special needs, as well as creating schools specifically tailored to serving certain populations of students with special needs.

"PRIVATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS INCREASE RACIAL SEGREGATION IN SCHOOLS."

REALITY: No reputable study shows that private school choice increases racial segregation. In fact, of the eight [studies using valid empirical methods](#) to examine school choice and racial segregation, seven found that school choice creates more racially integrated classrooms; one found no significant effect on integration. A 2016 analysis found the Louisiana Scholarship Program aids desegregation efforts in Louisiana. Moreover, most school choice advocates believe in the power of diverse schools and celebrate the fact that private school choice programs give kids from different socioeconomic backgrounds the opportunity to learn and collaborate together.

"LB753 WILL ONLY HELP URBAN STUDENTS."

REALITY: Public and private school choice are critically important to increasing education options for rural and suburban students. Students outside of major urban districts face real challenges due to population sparsity and school size, limiting many families' high-quality educational options. More rural and suburban policymakers are embracing school choice as a way to bring new and better opportunities to their constituents.

**TO HELP US SHARE THE TRUTH ABOUT LB753,
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