



TALKING POINTS: Empowerment Scholarship Accounts

FOR SPECIFIC BILLS THIS SESSION:

Empowerment accounts leave accountability at the door. Please support Rep. Carter's H2530 to remedy this problem.

- There is no way to know what the return on this type of investment is. Private schools or homeschoolers are not required to report any student achievement data tied to these accounts. H2530 is a good first step to address this problem.
- It has bipartisan support, and is co-sponsored by legislators like (NAME 2 off this list) Rep. Alston, Rep. Brophy McGee, Rep. Cardenas, Rep. Contreras, Sen. Crandall, Sen. Crandell, Rep. Gonzales, Rep. Goodale, Sen. Hobbs, Sen. Jackson, Jr., Sen. Landrum Taylor, Rep. Larkin, Sen. Lopez, Sen. McGuire, Sen. Meza, Rep. Miranda, Rep. Orr, Rep. Pratt, Sen. Tovar

GENERAL POINTS AGAINST ESAs:

These scholarship accounts violate the state Constitution because they appropriate public money to aid private schools. These are not the "parents' dollars," these are the taxpayers' dollars.

- The savings accounts allow some choice for parents on where to spend the money, however, the choices are "highly constrained," making it almost inevitable that the scholarship funds will be used primarily to pay private schools.
- According to the Arizona Department of Education, parents spent a total of \$198,764 in scholarship funds in the first quarter of fiscal 2012. About 92 percent went to private schools.

Scholarships allow the state to pull back from its financial commitment to public schools.

- The state's Constitution requires the state to provide and maintain a uniform public-school system.
- In a state that funds education at the bottom, we can't afford to divert more precious resources away from our public schools.
- Tax dollars are community assets meant to support the greater good – not parceled out to individuals to be spent as they see fit and without any accountability for results.
- I believe there ought to be great public schools for all, and the Legislature should be singularly charged with making that happen.

Public schools are required to provide a free and appropriate education to ALL children, including those with special needs (whether they be mild, severe or somewhere in between). Private schools are under no obligation to do so.

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- A mechanism already exists for special needs students to attend private schools at no cost to families
- Under the current system, students placed in private school settings by their home school districts retain all their rights under IDEA (individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and the taxpayers in the community maintain a greater degree of accountability through the public school, which is still responsible for the students' progress.
- While empowerment accounts appear to put their choice in the hands of parents, the choice is actually in the hands of private schools, which can pick and choose who they admit.