



Empowering Parents and Students by increasing the number of SFOs and allowing direct contributions by taxpayers

The state of Florida, since the early 2000s, has been a leader in the school choice movement. Starting from the establishment of the very first scholarship programs, Florida has put parents in control over their children's education.

During the 2023 session, Florida created a universal school choice program based on the education savings account (ESA) model. This was a huge step in the fight to put parents in charge of their children's education.

Since this program has rolled out, parents have been noticing some issues, including slow delivery of funds and reaching capacity from the scholarship programs. We believe the solution is found in increasing the number of scholarship funding organizations, or SFOs, and in allowing direct contributions by taxpayers.

Currently in Florida, only two SFOs operate, in which one has the vast majority of the scholarship funds going through them. We believe, that in using Arizona as a model, increasing the number of SFOs will provide for more specializations in the students served as well as better outcomes for all SFOs. By using a three-tiered system, in which smaller SFOs are allowed to use up to 10% of their funds towards administrative and marketing, a greater number of SFOs can enter the market. For the larger SFOs, they will have access to the normal 3%, and for mid-sized SFOs, access to 5%. This model will also empower parents by allowing them to choose the best SFO for their children's educational needs.

Lastly, we need to allow direct contributions by the taxpayers. In most of the states that have a similar ESA or universal school choice program, a major source of funding is taxpayer credits via the state income tax. While we don't have that in Florida, most educational funding at the local level comes through property tax. We believe Florida taxpayers should be able to designate up to 15% of their school district property tax toward an SFO. In Arizona, the ESA model has saved taxpayers money.

Proposed Language Change can be found on our website at:

<https://goflca.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/FTC-Update-1002.395-2.pdf>