



February 21, 2019

Support the Student Empowerment Act, H.R. 621 and S. 157

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your representative and senators and ask them to cosponsor the Student Empowerment Act, H.R. 621 and S. 157. Introduced by Rep. Jason Smith (R-Mo.) and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), the Student Empowerment Act would further expand 529 education savings accounts to include K-12 elementary and secondary school expenses for public, private, and religious schools, including homeschool students.

The bill amends the portion of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that increased school choice by expanding 529 accounts to include tuition for K-12 elementary and secondary schooling. The expansion of 529 accounts was a victory for school choice, but a point of order raised by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) stripped the expansion of its applicability to homeschoolers under the Byrd Rule.

These 529 accounts are tax-benefitted savings plans designed to increase and spur savings for forthcoming education expenses. Their use greatly expands school choice, allowing parents to use more of their own money for educational options that best fit their child's needs. It is no surprise, but still a shame, that Democrats continue to stifle tailor-fit educational opportunities and advocate instead in favor of the one-size-doesn't-fit-all model of federally-controlled education.

The Student Empowerment Act would right this wrong by allowing expenses such as tutoring costs, books, fees associated with standardized tests, and educational therapies for students with disabilities to be paid for out of 529 accounts. Students with disabilities would be able to use their 529 savings accounts to also pay for educational therapies. This is incredibly advantageous to these students, as they will be further empowered to learn in ways that are customized for their needs, that government-dictated education cannot possibly predict correctly.

“Under the Student Opportunity Amendment, homeschool families were wrongly and cynically excluded by Senate Democrats, leaving them ineligible to utilize the expanded usage of 529 savings accounts,” Sen. Cruz said of the Student Empowerment Act. “This bill re-includes homeschoolers, and empowers every family with access to an education that truly fits their child's needs.” This is critical, because, as

Rep. Smith highlighted, “Education is a huge driver of unexpected expenses, and expanding access to 529 savings accounts will make it easier for parents to afford an education tailored to their child’s unique needs.”

More than 75 percent of 529 plans are used by families making \$150,000 or less. Restoring the intent of the Student Opportunity Amendment by expanding 529 education savings accounts to include K-12 expenses for public, private, and homeschool students will help working class and middle-income families save money and better prepare their children for the future by equipping them with the best education available. For these reasons, I urge you to contact your representative and senators and ask them to cosponsor the Student Empowerment Act, H.R. 621 and S. 157.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Brandon', with a stylized, flowing script.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks