

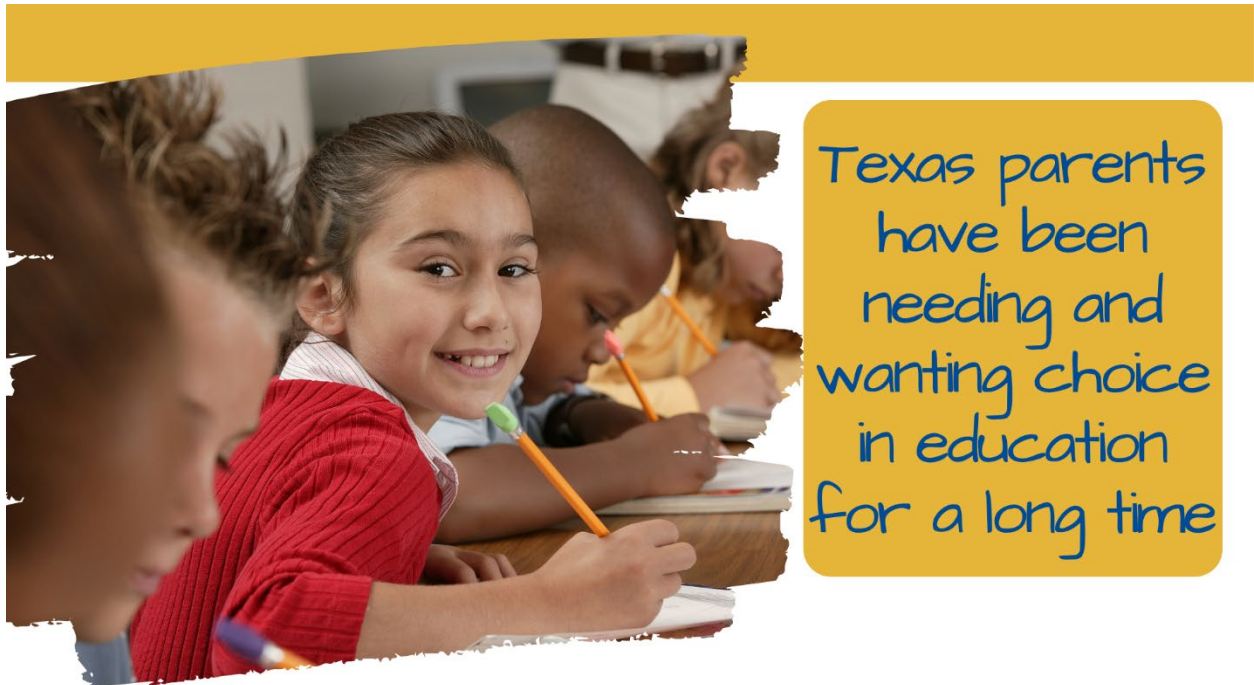


Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

THE PUBLIC POLICY VOICE OF THE CHURCH

Support the Family Educational Relief Program SB 1968 (Bettencourt) | HB 4537 (Middleton)

The establishment of the Family Educational Relief Program, and an insurance premium tax credit for contributions made for purposes of that program, empowers parents and guardians to choose from public, private, charter or homeschool options for their children's education. Catholic and other nonpublic school parents often make difficult sacrifices to pay tuition and fees while also supporting public schools through their hard-earned tax dollars. All parents want better options for their children and SB 1968 seeks to improve access to those options.



Texas parents
have been
needing and
wanting choice
in education
for a long time

PUT THE BEST INTEREST OF CHILDREN FIRST

Support SB 1968 and HB 4537



Texas Catholic
Conference of Bishops

txcatholic.org | 512-339-9882

Parental choice continues to be a top priority of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops. This is why **the Catholic Church in Texas educates nearly 60,000 students in Catholic schools and more than 350,000 public school students in catechism classes.**

The Family Educational Relief Program

- includes elements of the successful programs in Florida (Step Up for Students), Arizona, and Oklahoma, but with greater parental control by providing an Education Savings Account.
- increases financial stability via four potential funding mechanisms: grants, donations, general revenue appropriations and tax credits.
- allows public schools to maintain all local funding. The scholarship amounts in the bill are approximately half of current state spending per student, so there will be a fiscal positive to the state after its initial implementation. The state could choose to invest this funding in education and thereby increase the per student spending for those remaining in public schools.
- provides educational options to low-income families that they do not currently have for their children.
- does not limit or restrict homeschooling. Parents voluntarily choose to participate in the program. Any who do not want to accept it are free to continue to homeschool in any manner they choose.
- clearly safeguards and protects the privacy, autonomy and religious freedom of participants.

“More than 100,000 low-income students in Florida participate in the Step Up For Students program, which grants tax-credit funded scholarships to attend private schools. Even more students are currently enrolled in the state’s 650 charter schools. Most Step Up students are minorities whose mothers are registered Democrats. Yet many of these “school-choice moms” vote for gubernatorial candidates committed to protecting their ability to choose where their child goes to school.”

William Mattox, Wall Street Journal,
Nov. 20, 2018

These bills provide hope for the thousands of families on scholarship and charter school wait lists.

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops is the association of the Roman Catholic bishops of Texas. The TCCB represents 16 dioceses and 20 active bishops. Through the TCCB, the bishops provide a moral and social public policy voice, accredit the state's Catholic schools, and maintain archives that reflect the work and the history of the Catholic Church in Texas.