

**Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary  
Education**

**Testimony of Representative Adrian Smith (NE-03)**

**April 18, 2023**

**“School Choice: Expanding Educational Freedom for All”**

Thank you, Chairman Bean, Chairwoman Foxx, Ranking Member Bonamici, and members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this important topic at today’s hearing.

There’s no question school choice is having a moment nationwide. Data show that parental involvement leads to better outcomes for students<sup>1</sup>, and as legislators we have a responsibility to encourage more parental involvement in education, not less. School choice is one way to do that.

Parental empowerment is more important than ever before. It is incumbent upon us to come together and put forward creative solutions to ensure all children can access a quality education, no matter their background or where they live.

This was an issue near and dear to our friend and late colleague, Representative Jackie Walorski. While I wish Ms. Walorski were here testifying before you today, it is an honor to have carried forward her bill alongside Representative Burgess Owens, who serves on this important subcommittee.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/parental-engagement>

Our bill, the Educational Choice for Children Act, is an innovative policy mechanism to provide deserving students of all backgrounds with more options to fund their education needs, something we should all be able to agree on. It is important to note this measure leaves in place all existing public education resources.

The ECCA would create an annual \$10 billion pool of tax credits which Treasury would allocate to private, non-profit scholarship granting organizations, or SGOs, in each state and in DC. Those SGOs would receive donations from families and businesses allowing them to provide scholarships to families below 300% of their state's median income. SGOs would then allocate one-for-one tax credits back to the donors and grant the scholarships to families.

In addition to paying traditional tuition costs, the scholarships could also be used to pay for tutoring, supplies, and other needs for families in rural areas where their local district can't fully meet their needs and where traditional private school options don't exist.

Because this process is run by private, non-governmental SGOs, there is no governmental involvement in providing these scholarships.

Because we do this through the tax code, once again, we are leaving all existing funding for education budgets in place.

You may find this concept familiar because the structure of this tax incentive is similar to programs with strong bipartisan support, like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

The ECCA is supported by numerous stakeholders and advocates, and I hope today's subcommittee hearing will pave the way for additional action on this important legislation.

Thank you again for having me to discuss the ECCA and the importance of school choice to students and families everywhere.