

# Results

AMERICAN FEDERATION *for* CHILDREN

2014 ELECTION IMPACT REPORT





## Dear Friends,

There is an Education Revolution underway in America, and on Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2014, parents rose up and voted en masse to elect or re-elect pro-educational choice candidates throughout the country. The American Federation for Children, American Federation for Children Action Fund and our affiliated organizations and allies won 91 percent of our races, complementing the victories of pro-educational choice governors throughout the country.

But these results were not easy, and there was a lot at stake during these 2014 midterm elections. After years of continued growth in our movement, the opponents of parental choice saw the 2014 election cycle as their last chance to reverse our momentum. The nation's two largest teachers' unions announced they would spend as much as \$80 million to defend the status quo and defeat educational choice candidates. Combined with spending by state and local teachers' unions, an estimated \$100 million was spent nationwide to defeat pro-school choice governors, legislators and other elected officials. Despite the odds and despite being massively outspent, no amount of money could silence the voices of parents demanding more and better educational options, and greater educational freedom.

This year, AFC and its affiliated organizations spent a total of \$4.5 million in 243 races between the primary and general elections in nine states. The results would not have been possible without the support of donors, parents, allies, and all of the advocates for our "Ed Revolution." And these results will further fuel this revolution in 2015 and beyond as we work to unleash the power of creativity and innovation to break down barriers to opportunity and ensure a high-quality education for every child.

This election cycle was the most important in the history of the school choice movement, as we had the challenge of defending the electoral gains of the past four years and the opportunity to expand those gains in current and new states. These elections have given us the opportunity to strengthen and expand high-quality educational options all across the country, and we will need your help to do it!

Thank you for your continued support as we fight to advance the cause of educational choice nationwide.

Sincerely,



Betsy DeVos

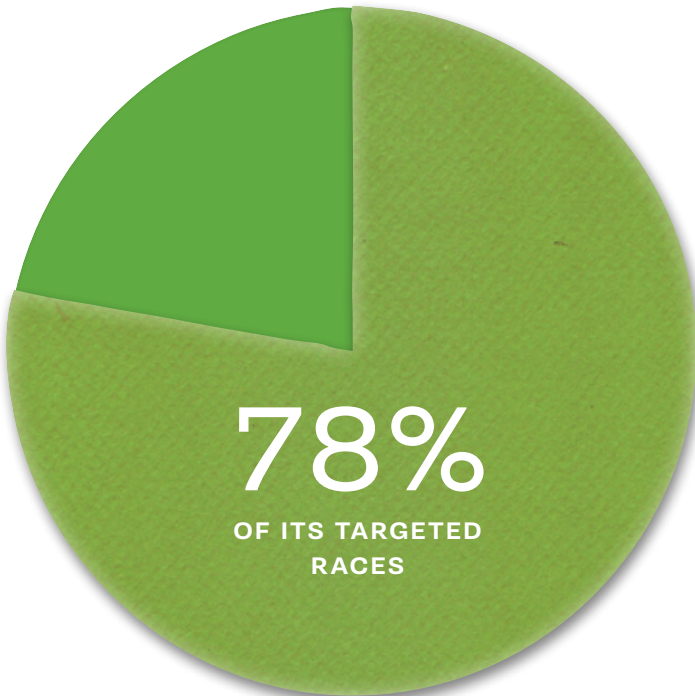
*Chairman, American Federation*

# Game-Changing Results

MIDTERMS PRODUCE BIG GAINS FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

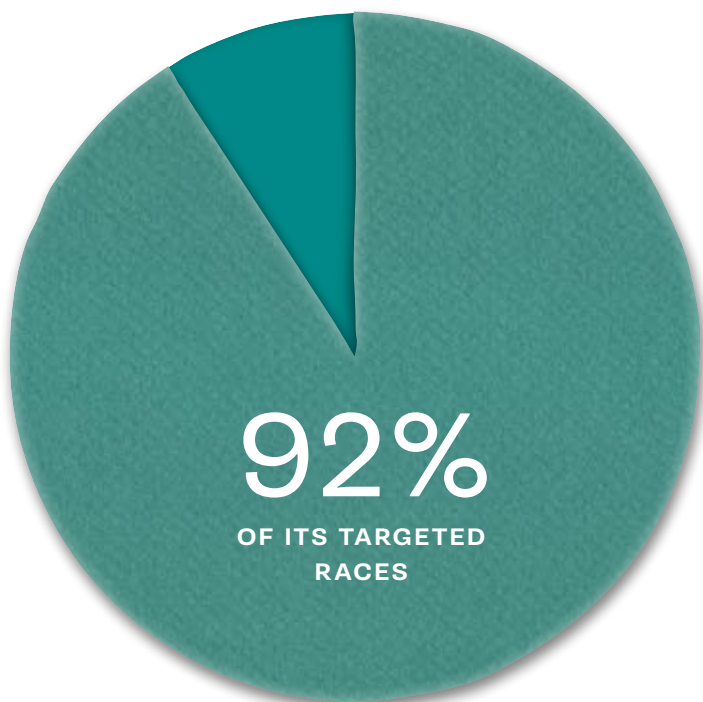
## PRIMARY ELECTION

AFC's school choice candidates prevailed in



## GENERAL ELECTION

AFC's school choice candidates prevailed in



# Game-Changing Results

MIDTERMS PRODUCE BIG GAINS FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE

WE INVESTED IN  
**243**  
RACES

WE PARTICIPATED IN NINE STATES



## 2014 VOTER CONTACT TOTALS

20

INDIVIDUAL  
DIGITAL ADS

17

DIFFERENT  
RADIO ADS

LIVE CALLS IN

9

RACES

2,624

CALLS MADE

10

DIFFERENT  
RECORDED CALLS

113,409

ROBOCALLS MADE

139

INDIVIDUAL  
MAILERS

1,544,909

MAIL PIECES SENT

6

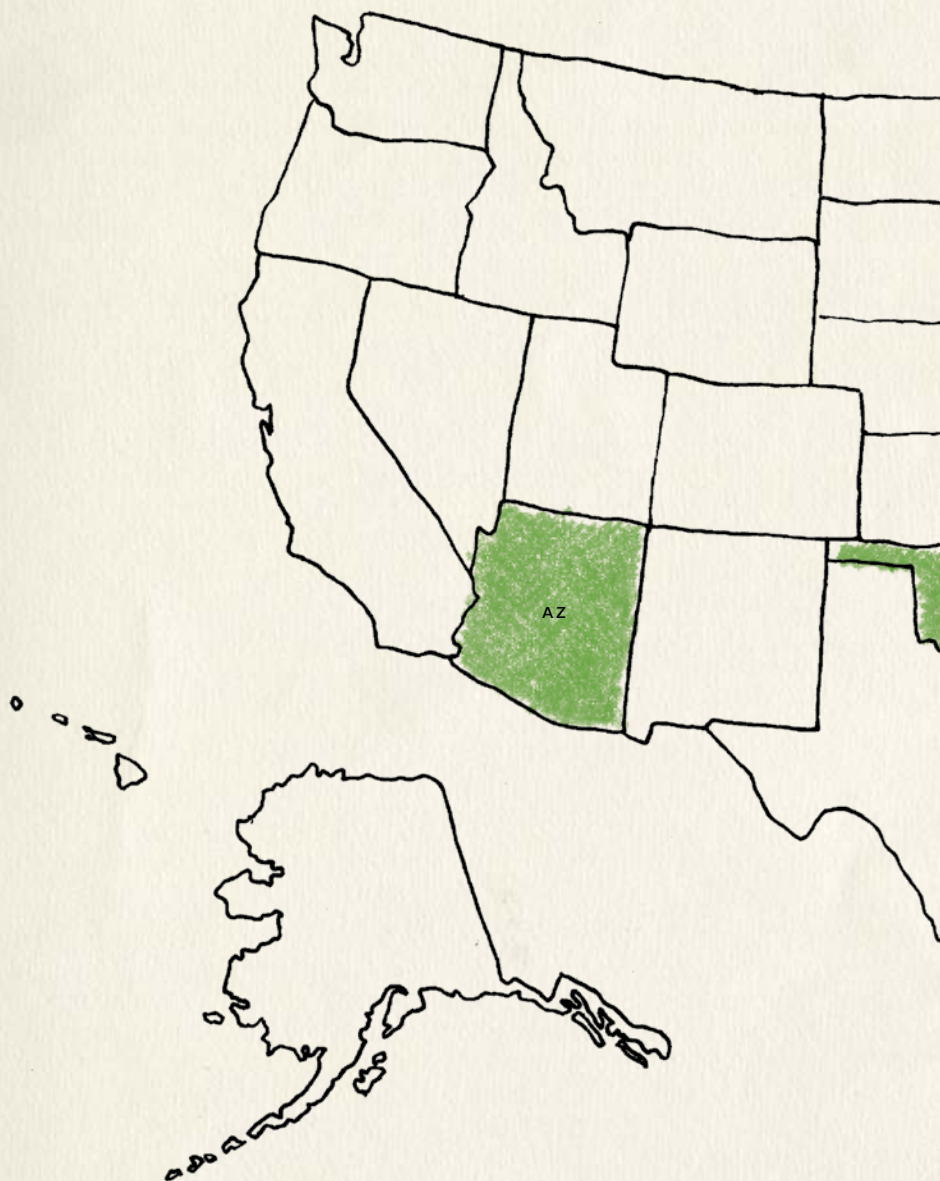
TV ADS

1

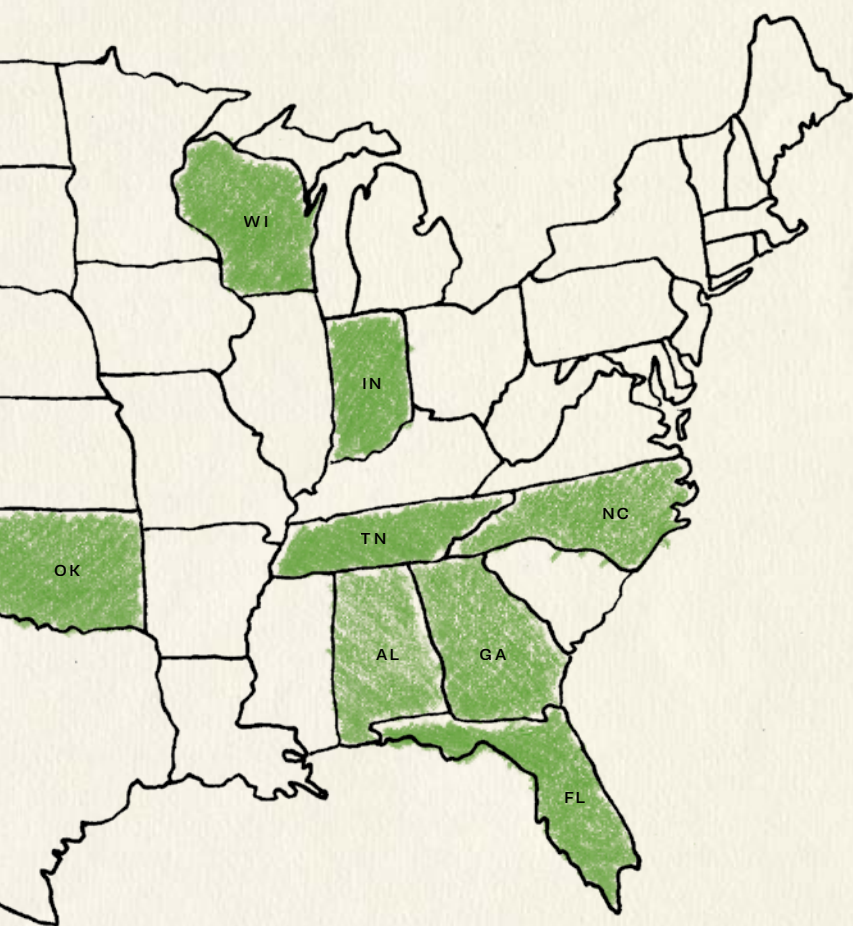
BILLBOARD

## School Choice Midterm Elections

NINE STATES AND 243 RACES







## Major Victories

### Florida

Gov. Rick Scott's re-election was both a strategic and moral victory for educational choice. After the teachers' union and school boards association sued to stop the new Education Savings Account (ESA) and existing tax credit scholarship program, Democratic candidate and former Governor Charlie Crist flip-flopped and became an opponent of these programs, forcing the issue into the center of the campaign.

### North Carolina

Working with the NC Citizens for Educational Freedom Independent Expenditure PAC, the educational choice coalition backed the successful re-election of the chief justice of the state Supreme Court, supported 11 Democratic legislative candidates and saw its candidates win 21 out of 22 legislative races overall.

### Georgia

AFC went 39 for 40 in Georgia, electing four pro-educational choice Democrats and upsetting four incumbents, strengthening the educational choice majority in the state legislature.

### Wisconsin

Despite being attacked relentlessly by his opponent and the teachers' unions for his unapologetic leadership for school choice, Gov. Scott Walker doubled down on his support for educational choice and campaigned on expanding Wisconsin's statewide program. In the legislative races, AFC-backed candidates won 18 of 20 races, defeating three incumbents and strengthening the state's pro-educational choice legislature.

# Broad Support

In nearly all parts of the country, educational choice governors were swept to victory, notably in Wisconsin, Florida and Georgia, where the incumbent governors were aggressively attacked because of their leadership in enacting and expanding school choice. In each of those instances, those governors’ support for educational choice played a significant role in the success of their campaigns.

AFC Target States
Gov. Scott Walker (WI)
Gov. John Kasich (OH)
Gov. Rick Scott (FL)
Gov. Nathan Deal (GA)
Gov. Bill Haslam (TN)
Gov. Mary Fallin (OK)
Gov. Doug Ducey (AZ)
Mayor Muriel Bowser (Washington, D.C.)

Notable Victories
Gov. Nikki Haley (SC)
Gov. Susana Martinez (NM)
Gov. Brian Sandoval (NV)
Gov. Terry Branstad (IA)
Gov. Sam Brownback (KS)
Gov. Bruce Rauner (IL)
Gov. Asa Hutchinson (AR)

## National Coverage

---



### TEACHERS UNIONS FLUNKED THEIR MIDTERMS

*by Kevin P. Chavous*

Democrats should beware of being on the wrong side of the school choice issue in 2016.

---

## WALL STREET JOURNAL

### TEACHERS UNIONS FLUNKED THEIR MIDTERMS

A torrent of negative union ads couldn't hold back education reformers, who won almost across the board.

"The American Federation for Children, which supports private-school scholarships, elected all 13 of its legislative candidates in Alabama despite being outspent by the state teachers union 27-to-1. In Tennessee, the pro-school-choice outfit toppled Democratic state Rep. Gloria Johnson, a teachers-union favorite."

---

## EDUCATION WEEK

### SCHOOL-CHOICE LEGISLATION WINS BIG IN STATES THIS YEAR

*by Andrew Ujifusa*

"Among the big winners this year could be advocates of school choice programs in states like Illinois and Massachusetts, where Republican governors will take over, and in Wisconsin, where an activist GOP governor was re-elected."

# TIME

## A ROUGH ELECTION DAY FOR TEACHERS UNIONS

*by Haley Sweetland Edwards*

“Union-backed candidates embracing a one-size-fits-all, status quo education system for our children were soundly rejected by voters,” said Kevin Chavous, executive counsel of the American Federation for Children.

“This election marks the beginning of the end for the education establishment; no longer can unions expect to buy the outcome of elections,” he added. “Voters at every level have rejected an antiquated education establishment agenda and system.”

---



## TEACHERS UNIONS SPEND BIG, LOSE BIG ON MIDTERM ELECTIONS

*by Perry Chiaramonte*

“I think this whole idea of unions muscling their way into the political forum is turning,” said Chavous. “What we are seeing is that people are concerned about the educational system and, frankly, the union’s tactics are becoming a thing of the past.”

Chavous pointed out that candidates who went against school choice and voucher programs turned off voters in states like Wisconsin, North Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Florida and Michigan while pro-reform candidates fared well.



## Alabama

The 2014 midterm election was a historic year for school choice in Alabama. After years of the political landscape being dominated by the Alabama Education Association (AEA), the Alabama Federation for Children was successful in electing pro-educational choice candidates in the primary and general election. In every contested election, the pro-educational choice candidate was opposed by an AEA-backed candidate.

The momentum began during the primary elections, when the AEA spent more than \$7 million to elect anti-education reform candidates and came away with no victories in state Senate races and only a handful of victories in the state House.

On November 4th, the Alabama Federation for Children PAC won 25 out of 27 of its general election races, including 13 out of 13 in match-ups with candidates backed by the AEA. In all, AEA outspent the AFC PAC by a margin of 27-to-1, but the outcome demonstrates that voters overwhelmingly supported the pro-educational choice and pro-children-first message offered by the Alabama Federation for Children.

### CANDIDATE HIGHLIGHTS

A handful of races stand out over the course of the election cycle in Alabama. AFC supported incumbent Sen. Jimmy Holley, who was targeted by more than \$350,000 in spending by the teachers' union. Also in the Senate, despite \$250,000 in negative ads run against him, political newcomer Steve Livingston knocked off longtime anti-school choice opponent Todd Greeson. Both victories helped to expand our educational choice majority in the state Senate.

The teachers' union also put forth significant effort to defeat House and Senate leadership because of their support in passing educational choice legislation in Alabama. The AEA spent more than half a million dollars to defeat two educational choice champions, but failed. The Alabama Federation for Children PAC helped to defend both House and Senate leadership and other educational choice champions.



## Arizona

During the election cycle in Arizona, the American Federation for Children (AFC) worked to expand an already strong political presence in support of educational choice and defend incumbent legislators who had been targeted for defeat. The AFC also focused on electing newcomers who demonstrated the potential to be educational choice champions in order to add to an already strong school choice majority in the state legislature.

AFC invested over \$300,000 in direct mail pieces, radio ads, phone calls and a strategically placed billboard to support our candidates. As a result, 13 out of 14 AFC-supported candidates won their primary, and all six AFC-supported candidates were victorious in the general election.

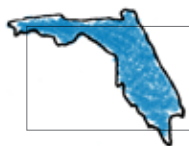
### CANDIDATE HIGHLIGHTS

Former incumbent State Senators Sylvia Allen (R), a solid educational choice advocate, and Tom O'Halleran (I), an ardent opponent, squared off in an attempt to return to the Senate. With AFC's support, Allen prevailed.

Reginald Bolding (D) and Jill Norgaard (R) will both be freshman state House members after winning their races. Bolding, from South Phoenix, will represent an area with multiple failing schools, and those families will now be represented by advocates for educational choice options. Norgaard, who attended AFC's Arizona candidate training school, promises to be a rising star in the educational choice movement.

One of the many school choice supporters who had been targeted for defeat by supporters of the education status quo was Steve Montenegro (R). Montenegro was victorious on election night with AFC's support and has since been elected by his colleagues to the position of House Majority Leader, ensuring that school choice will remain a vital part of the majority agenda.

Although AFC was not directly involved in the race, we were pleased with Doug Ducey's (R) election victory as governor. Formerly the Arizona state treasurer, Ducey is an outspoken advocate for educational choice and has vowed to expand high-quality educational options for parents.



## Florida

Educational choice was the deciding factor for many voters when choosing between Gov. Rick Scott (R), an educational choice supporter, and his opponent Charlie Crist (D), who turned against school choice as the teachers' union-backed candidate. With the help of social media, the Florida Federation for Children (FFC) was able to make more than 65,000 voter impressions, and more than 45,000 tax credit scholarship parents read emails notifying them of Crist's opposition to educational choice and his refusal to speak out against a lawsuit filed by the Florida Education Association (FEA) and the Florida School Boards Association against the highly successful and popular tax credit scholarship program. The lawsuit essentially asks the courts to deny 70,000 children in low-income families access to a school of their parents' choice. The FFC also utilized direct mail, contacting the families served by the program to relay this same message about Crist's flip-flop on the tax credit scholarship program and his support of the lawsuit.

During the primary elections, the FFC engaged in voter communications in 12 legislative races for both Democratic and Republican candidates. In the general election, the FFC communicated about candidates through direct voter contact in 19 highly contested legislative races across the state. In those 31 highly competitive races, the educational choice supporter won 24.

Due to the Florida School Boards Association's recent lawsuit against the tax credit scholarship program, the FFC became involved in county school board campaigns for the first time. The FFC educated voters about county school board candidates who supported and opposed the lawsuit. School board candidates in favor of educational choice successfully ousted the president and president-elect of the state school boards association in the primary elections along with one candidate moving to a runoff and one additional solid victory for a school choice supporter. In the general elections, pro-school choice candidates prevailed in all four FFC-targeted school board races, which ensures a majority pro-school choice county school board in several counties.

Overall election spending by the teachers' unions and affiliates surpassed \$2.8 million this election cycle in Florida, compared to approximately \$1.3 million by the FFC.



#### CANDIDATE HIGHLIGHTS

Erik Fresen (R), faced with a tough re-election campaign in a “tossup” district, overcame massive spending by the unions to win re-election by a wide margin. Fresen has been a leading advocate for educational choice and was the sponsor of the 2014 legislation that provided significant changes to the Florida tax credit scholarship program and created the Personal Learning Scholarship Account for students with special needs, such as autism spectrum disorder. As chairman of the House Education Appropriations Committee, Fresen has also led the effort to establish equity funding for charter schools.

The Florida Federation for Children sent five different English- and Spanish-language mail pieces to targeted voters in Rep. Fresen’s district to communicate about his success in opening more educational options for parents and other legislative accomplishments.



#### SCHOOL CHOICE BACKER SCOTT SEES RISE IN BLACK SUPPORT IN FLORIDA

“Scott, meanwhile, tried to build some inroads with the black community, holding meetings with Manuel Sykes, a prominent St. Petersburg pastor and school voucher supporter who switched parties and joined the GOP in October.”



#### WHY DEMOCRATS LOST—13 REASONS

“School choice may have carved off votes from Black churchgoers... During the last month of the campaign, the Scott campaign effectively used school choice as a “wedge” issue to carve off usually dependably Democratic Black church votes.”



## Georgia

A highly contested governor's race between incumbent Gov. Nathan Deal (R) and Jason Carter (D), a state senator and grandson of former President Jimmy Carter, drew national attention to Georgia.

Educational choice was a platform issue of Deal's campaign, while union-backed organizations attempted, unsuccessfully, to use this against him in their effort to protect the status quo. Deal won the election with 54 percent of the vote.

The American Federation for Children Action Fund-Georgia Independent Committee ran ads statewide on radio, targeted to African-American voters, which touted Deal's record on education and educational choice, specifically.

AFC also heavily focused on strengthening the educational choice majority in the legislature. Using both independent expenditures and direct contributions, AFC's affiliated Georgia political committees backed 88 candidates in the primary and general elections, with 75 of those candidates winning their respective races. In total, AFC's related Georgia political committees spent approximately \$300,000 this election cycle.

### CANDIDATE HIGHLIGHTS

During the primary election, educational choice supporter Michael Rhett (D) emerged victorious with 51 percent of the vote in his race against the most senior incumbent in the state Senate, Steve Thompson (D). Rhett will be a freshman legislator, although he has served his local community for years and has always made high-quality education for all children a top priority.

Rep. Valencia Stovall (D) defeated two former legislators to retain her seat without a runoff. Stovall received significant criticism from opponents of educational choice, who helped to drive the primary challenge against her. Their efforts, however, were unsuccessful and Stovall proved to be wildly popular in her district.



## Indiana

The American Federation for Children worked closely with the Hoosiers for Quality Education (HQE) PAC to support pro-educational choice Democratic and Republican candidates. In the primary election, 16 of its 18 endorsed candidates were successful. In the general election, the HQE PAC was successful in 35 of 36 races, supporting both Democrats and Republicans. Among the most notable races, House Education Chairman Bob Behning (R) came under heavy fire from the state teachers' union in the primary election. They were upset with his pivotal role in changing the traditional system in Indiana to one that is more accountable to parents. Despite significant spending by the union, Behning was re-elected in the general election with 67 percent of the vote.

The HQE PAC and its supported candidates were also extremely pleased with results from state Senate elections. Educational choice candidates replaced many lukewarm or outright opponents of educational choice, including the defeat of an anti-school choice Republican in the primary.

### CANDIDATE HIGHLIGHTS

Jeff Raatz (R) served as the principal of Richmond Academy and had 15 years of service in the education field before running for state Senate. As a current business owner, he recognizes the major academic and financial struggles facing Indiana's education system, and Raatz will be a strong voice in the legislature for parents who need access to more quality educational options.

Erin Houchin (R) defeated longtime anti-school choice incumbent Democratic Sen. Richard Young. She will be the only female member of the Indiana State Senate who has school-aged children and supports empowering parents with high-quality education options.



## North Carolina

It was a team effort in North Carolina to achieve large election gains that will aid school choice efforts in 2015. The American Federation for Children worked with its partner NC Citizens for Educational Freedom IE PAC to assist in electing 21 educational choice–supporting legislators. AFC and its North Carolina partner supported 11 Democratic and 11 Republican school choice supporters and won 21 out of 22 races. The Election Day results showed that North Carolinians support the newly created opportunity scholarship program as well as expanded high-quality public charter school options.

### CANDIDATE HIGHLIGHTS

Rep. Rob Bryan, the lead sponsor of North Carolina’s Opportunity Scholarship Program, was re-elected with over 55 percent of the vote. Sen. Chad Barefoot, a strong supporter of parental choice, was in one of the most contested races and won with nearly 53 percent of the vote.

### RESULTS IN NORTH CAROLINA

AFC and NC partners won 21 out of 22 general election races.

21 VICTORIES

1 LOSS



## Oklahoma

2014 was the inaugural year for AFC's involvement in Oklahoma elections, but our political action efforts made a huge impact nonetheless. With support from local community leaders, the Oklahoma Federation for Children Action Fund, AFC's local political committee, invested approximately \$130,000 in the state with the goal to increase educational choice support among both Democrats and Republicans in the state legislature.

The primary and runoff elections had a great deal of positive momentum, with three Democratic and five Republican educational choice supporters backed by the OFC Action Fund winning their races. In the general election, our OFC Action Fund-backed candidate was successfully re-elected.

### CANDIDATE HIGHLIGHTS

In what was AFC's most notable victory, GOP frontrunner Melissa Abdo, a Tulsa-area school board member, was defeated by Chuck Strohm during the August runoff election for a seat in the state House. Abdo, who had overwhelming support from the education establishment, was criticized for filing a lawsuit against parents of special needs students for participating in the state's voucher program. The *Tulsa World* newspaper cited her opposition to school choice as a reason for her defeat.

Rep. Jason Nelson (R), the leading advocate for education reform legislation in the state House, went into the general election in one of the most competitive districts in the state. Rep. Nelson was re-elected in his swing district with 53.2 percent of the vote despite heavy opposition from educational choice opponents.



## Tennessee

The momentum for expanding educational options in Tennessee continued to manifest itself in the 2014 elections. During the primary elections, five out of the six Tennessee Federation for Children PAC (TFC PAC)–supported candidates were successful in head-to-head races against teachers’ union–backed candidates.

The TFC PAC took this momentum into the general election race between TFC PAC–backed Eddie Smith and incumbent Rep. Gloria Johnson. Smith ousted Rep. Johnson after Johnson spoke openly on multiple occasions against educational choice and received more than \$100,000 in special interest union contributions.

The TFC PAC also supported two other candidates in highly competitive House races against incumbents. Unfortunately, these candidates did not win the seats, but lost by less than one-half of one percent in each. Those tough defeats nonetheless demonstrated that incumbents can no longer take for granted parents and children who demand educational choice. The TFC PAC spent approximately \$500,000 in the 2014 election cycle.

### CANDIDATE HIGHLIGHTS

Jerry Sexton (R) challenged 20-year incumbent Dennis “Coach” Roach for his state House seat in the primary election. A former public school teacher and NEA member, Roach was an outspoken opponent of educational choice and attacked Sexton for his support of school choice throughout the primary race. Sexton won the primary, defeating “Coach” Roach by approximately 1,000 votes.

Eddie Smith (R), a strong educational choice advocate, went head to head with the National Education Association’s top legislative candidate in Tennessee, Rep. Gloria Johnson. He was able to defeat Rep. Johnson with 50.69 percent of the vote.



## Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, school choice was essentially put on the ballot in 2014, as opponents tried to use the state's popular educational choice programs as a wedge issue. In nearly all attempts, pro-school choice candidates prevailed, and, most importantly, Gov. Scott Walker was re-elected.

Gov. Walker campaigned on his support for educational choice and his desire to expand Wisconsin's statewide educational choice program. He was relentlessly attacked by the teachers' unions and his union-backed Democratic opponent, Mary Burke. Both the National Education Association and the American Federation for Teachers were heavily invested in the effort to defeat Walker. The American Federation for Children Action Fund-Wisconsin IE Committee successfully supported Democrat Leon Young and two Republican candidates' primary Assembly campaigns. The general elections showed positive results, as three incumbent state legislators who oppose educational choice were defeated, and the pro-educational choice legislative majority was strengthened with 17 out of 20 targeted campaign wins. In total, the American Federation for Children Action Fund-WI IE Committee spent approximately \$850,000 on independent expenditures.

### CANDIDATE HIGHLIGHTS

State Representative Mandy Wright (AD 85) had been one of the legislature's most vocal opponents of educational choice. A former union activist, Wright held a series of town hall meetings across the state during the fall, where she railed against the statewide educational choice program. She was defeated by a margin of 86 votes. Educational choice opponents Jeff Smith (HD 93) and Amy Sue Vruwink (AD 70) were also defeated.

# Additional Progress in 2014

With these victories, the educational choice coalition is unquestionably in a stronger legislative and political position than at any point in the nearly 25-year history of the movement. The election work of AFC’s affiliated political committees sets the stage for further progress for America’s children as we engage in lobbying, grassroots activism, communications and outreach to inform eligible disadvantaged families about educational choice programs. Our election work also paves the way for charter school advancements and other meaningful education reforms.



## Arkansas

The educational choice coalition is hopeful that new Governor Asa Hutchinson will be an improvement over his predecessor. Legislative sponsors will be working to enact new private school choice and charter school expansion bills with a more strongly pro-educational choice majority in the state legislature.



## Illinois

Challenger Bruce Rauner (R) ousted incumbent Governor Pat Quinn (D) in a major upset. Rauner publicly campaigned on an education reform platform that included support for a Florida-style tax credit scholarship for disadvantaged children to attend private school.



## Nevada

Control of the state House of Representatives shifted to Republicans, significantly increasing the chances for Gov. Sandoval to move his tax credit scholarship legislation.





## New Jersey

Educational choice supporter Sen. Cory Booker (D) was elected to a full term in the United States Senate.



## New Mexico

The state House of Representatives shifted to Republican control for the first time since 1953, enhancing the chances of moving tax credit scholarship legislation.



## New York

Republicans took control of the state Senate, and Democratic Gov. Cuomo has publicly supported educational choice, significantly increasing the chances that a tax credit program will be passed in 2015.



## Rhode Island

Democrat Gina Raimondo, the current state treasurer, was elected governor. Raimondo was strongly opposed by the teachers' union in the primary, and she has previously expressed support for tax credit scholarship programs.



## Washington, D.C.

Democratic Councilwoman Muriel Bowser, a longtime supporter of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), was elected mayor after having defeated the anti-OSP incumbent mayor in the primary.

# Board of Directors

## AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN

*Betsy DeVos*

CHAIRMAN

Grand Rapids, Michigan

*John F. Kirtley*

VICE CHAIRMAN

Tampa, Florida

*H. Lee Barfield II*

Nashville, Tennessee

*Boykin Curry*

New York, New York

*Kathy Hubbard*

Indianapolis, Indiana

*Bill Oberndorf*

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

San Francisco, California





[www.FederationforChildren.org](http://www.FederationforChildren.org) | [FederationforChildren.blogspot.com](http://FederationforChildren.blogspot.com)



[schoolchoicenow](#)

|



[schoolchoicenow](#)

|



[schoolchoiceworks](#)

---

The American Federation for Children is a 501(c)(4) issue advocacy organization.  
Donations to the American Federation for Children are not tax deductible for  
federal income tax purposes.

The American Federation for Children Action Fund is a 527 political organization.  
Contributions or gifts to the American Federation for Action Fund are not deductible  
as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.