

PROGRESS

AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN

2018 LEGISLATIVE IMPACT REPORT



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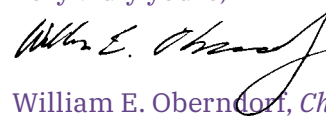
Dear Friends,

I write to share our annual progress report of legislative accomplishments. Some of the exciting progress from 2018 came from Georgia, Florida, and Puerto Rico. Georgia nearly doubled the size of the cap on their tax credit scholarship program, the new Florida Hope Scholarship provides children who are bullied or harassed in their current school setting access to additional educational options, and Puerto Rico joined the 26 states and the District of Columbia in providing private school choice as an option for families. The Puerto Rico Program of Free Selection of Schools gives families private school options, prioritizing children from lower-income families and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Students will begin enrolling in charter schools on the island this fall.

Our work at the American Federation for Children involves the critical component of passing high-quality educational choice laws and improving them to help grow enrollments. This work is only made possible by another critical component of our efforts, which is to elect reform-minded legislators to pass such laws. In the years when elections occur alongside legislative sessions, there are always challenges as we continue the fight to give families across America more freedom in the education of their children. The opposition is as committed as ever to preventing educational choice. However, our organization remains dedicated to our long-term vision of empowering families, especially lower-income families, with the freedom to choose the best K-12 education for their children.

Thank you for helping the American Federation for Children in this critically important work.

Very truly yours,

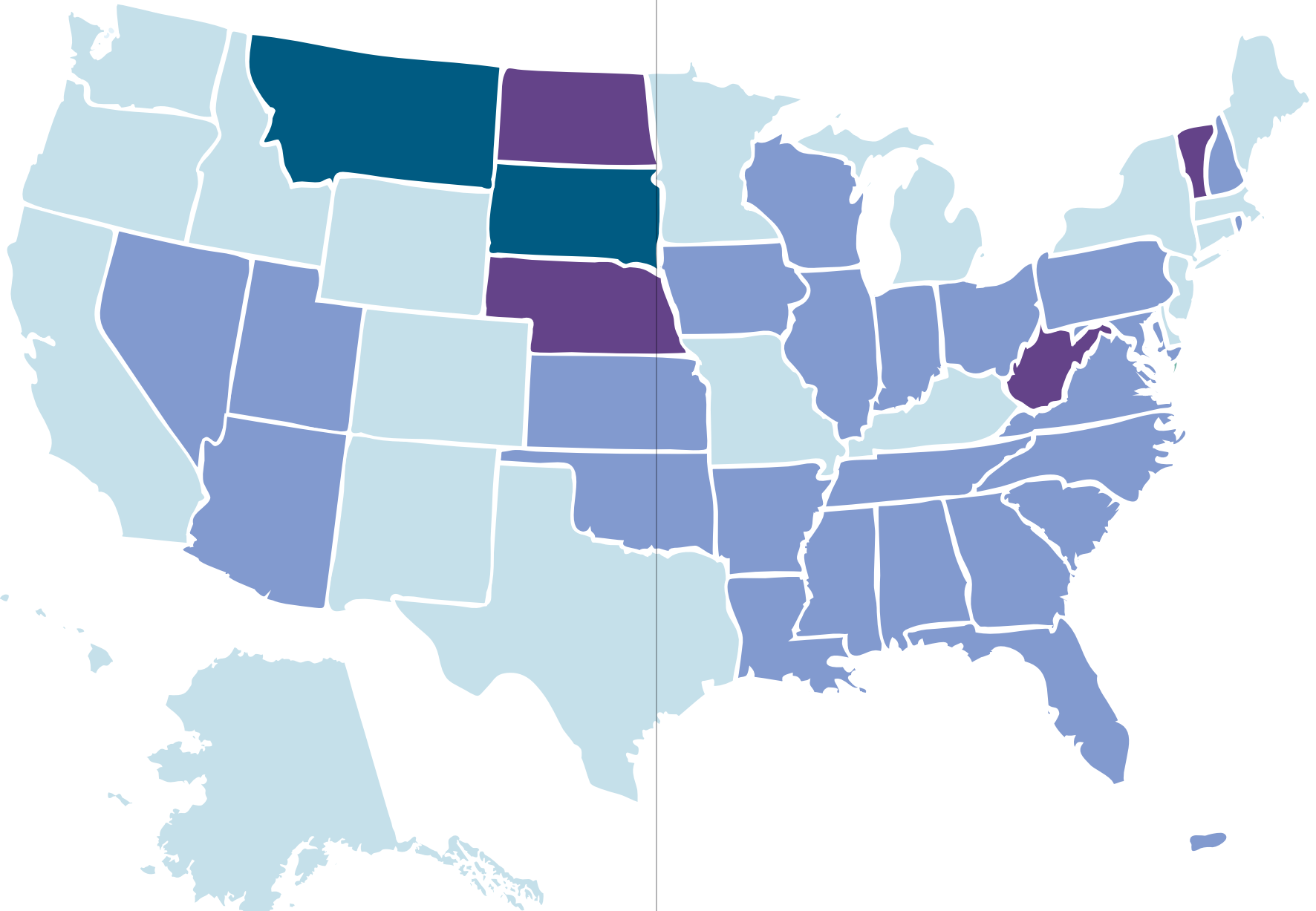


William E. Oberdorff, *Chairman, American Federation for Children*

STATES WITH SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS

Educational Choice is Scalable

- STATES WITH PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS
- STATES WITH PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS AND NO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS
- STATES WITH PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS AND NO PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM
- STATES WITH NO PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE OR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL LAWS



Alabama School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
3,481	300	3,781



Students attend the annual school choice rally in Alabama.



Alabama

This year AFC helped fend off challenges to the Alabama Accountability Act by strengthening the coalition of supporters in the Alabama Senate. AFC will continue to build relationships among members of the House to grow support for future school choice initiatives.

In February, AFC co-hosted a training school for political candidates, campaign managers, and volunteers. More than 100 individuals participated, including many legislative candidates. AFC helped develop the curriculum and programming and presented on school choice.

AFC also served as a main organizer for the Statehouse Luncheon, a National School Choice Week event, where students benefiting from the Alabama Accountability Act had the opportunity to meet and speak to legislators about their schools.

Demand for additional educational options continues to grow in Alabama. When the application period for the Alabama Opportunity Scholarship Fund opened, 1,400 applications were submitted in just two hours. AFC will continue working with families, coalition partners, and policymakers to increase the scholarship cap so even more children can access educational choice.



Arizona

Arizona was a hotbed for politically motivated teacher strikes and walkouts in 2018. AFC was busy defending the state’s reputation as a national leader for affording parents high-quality educational options.

In total, in 2018, AFC helped stop nine bills that threatened to harm school choice in Arizona. AFC also helped pass two bills related to facilities availability for charter and private schools. By working to increase investment in the base funding formula, AFC also helped increase the dollars available for families through education savings accounts. Finally, AFC worked with allies to repeal and replace the 2017 universal ESA expansion, which ended unsuccessfully on the last day of the legislative session. The ESA expansion has been forced to the ballot in 2018 by opponents of educational choice. Should the referendum pass, the 2017 universal expansion will take effect; should the referendum fail, nearly one-third of the state’s K–12 students will be eligible for an ESA as the cap on the original legislation will be lifted in 2019.

This year marked AFC’s fourth annual Arizona Legislative Reception and Awards Ceremony, where legislative leaders were recognized for supporting families through school choice. And AFC was a key partner in twice-monthly legislative luncheons that kept members current on legislation and strategy.

Arizona School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2016–17	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017–18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
78,226	188,000	266,226

* For some of the private school choice programs in AZ and IN, we use 2016–17 enrollment numbers as those are the most currently available.



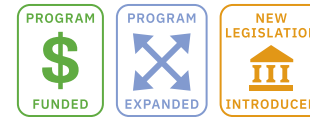
Our Arizona team hosted events across the state to inform families about educational choice. Students were able to choose a brand-new backpack filled with school supplies.

Arkansas School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
167	28,200	28,367



Students attended an outreach event for schools participating in the Succeed Scholarship Program.

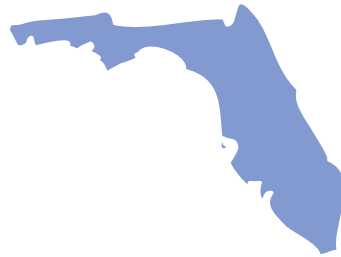


Arkansas

Working with our Arkansas partners, AFC helped secure additional funding to expand the Succeed Scholarship Program. Previously, only those attending a public school were eligible for participation. With the addition in funding, foster students in a group home, as well as students attending a private school, will be eligible as well.

AFC also worked toward passing an Education Savings Account program. Unfortunately, it failed by only a handful of votes in the House after making it through the Senate and the House Education Committee. Efforts will continue to pass this legislation in 2019, as well as to further expand the Succeed Scholarship Program.

On the ground, AFC's partner the Reform Alliance hosted a series of forums featuring state legislators, program administrators, and disability advocates across the state, strengthening the coalition of stakeholders willing to mobilize and advocate for expanding educational choice.



Florida

This year the Florida team focused on expanding school choice by creating new programs and increasing funding for the state’s tax credit scholarship program, the largest tax credit scholarship program in the country.

Florida passed a new school choice law, The Hope Scholarship Program, which will expand educational options to students who have been the victims of bullying. In addition, more than \$145 million was secured for Charter School Capital Outlay Funding, as was an additional source of funding for the tax credit scholarship program. Increased funding for the Gardiner Scholarship Program allowed for enrollment growth of more than 20 percent in one year's time.

Thanks to AFC’s ongoing work to establish, expand, and defend school choice programs, approximately 46 percent of all students in Florida attended a school made possible through choice during the 2017–18 school year, including more than 100,000 students receiving a tax credit scholarship and more than 30,000 benefiting from the McKay Scholarship for students with disabilities.

Florida School Choice Enrollment

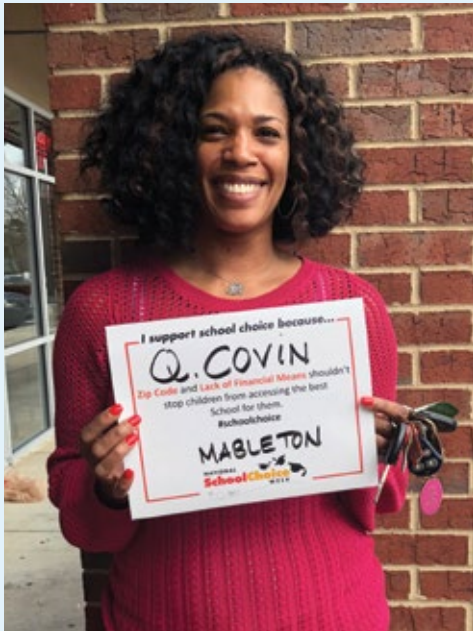
PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
148,401	302,000	450,401



Families met with lawmakers to advocate for expanding educational choice in Florida.

Georgia School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
17,796	70,500	88,296



A school choice supporter joined in to send a message to Georgia lawmakers about the importance of expanding opportunities for all children, regardless of income.



Georgia

Expanding Georgia’s popular tax credit scholarship program was AFC’s priority this legislative session. We were successful in the push to increase the program cap from \$58 million to \$100 million for the next 10 years, meaning thousands more children will have the opportunity to attend a school of their family’s choice. And AFC worked to pass legislation giving the state’s charter schools more resources, helping to narrow the funding gap between charters and traditional district schools.

AFC also organized parents to testify before a legislative study committee considering expanding Georgia’s Special Needs Scholarship to an ESA program, giving parents more flexibility with the dollars meant to educate their children.

The popular Bruster’s Ice Cream events AFC hosts at churches, summer camps, Boys and Girls Clubs, and schools continue to bring communities together to learn about educational choice.



Indiana

In 2018, AFC’s Indiana partners worked to improve existing reforms and defend against attempts to add layers of unnecessary bureaucracy to Indiana’s choice programs. Numerous attempts to circumvent a law that allows charter schools access to unused school buildings, limit the incentives to utilize College Choice 529 plans for private school tuition, and impose burdensome requirements on charter schools were thwarted by AFC’s allied organizations.

AFC’s Indiana partner the Institute for Quality Education worked with the chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees to create a needed, short-term fix that will allow schools to continue utilizing vouchers while lawmakers work to modernize current statute.

Indiana School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2016-17	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
44,882	38,800	83,682

* For some of the private school choice programs in AZ and IN, we use 2016-17 enrollment numbers as those are the most currently available.



Students and teachers pose with Governor Eric Holcomb during National School Choice Week.

Louisiana School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
9,318	80,200	89,518



Louisiana Federation for Children's Alkinee Jackson distributes backpacks at the Riding Your Way to Success outreach event in Baton Rouge.



Louisiana

AFC's Louisiana team was instrumental in obtaining additional funding for the Louisiana Scholarship Program for both the 2017-18 school year and the 2018-19 school year. While the governor's budget underfunded the popular and in-demand program, the additional dollars AFC worked to secure will give many more families the opportunity to attend a private school of choice.

AFC also helped protect Louisiana charter schools, which serve more than 80,000 students, from losing the autonomy they need to be so highly effective.

According to this year's annual parental satisfaction survey conducted by the Louisiana Federation for Children, more than 93% of parents participating in the Louisiana Scholarship Program are satisfied with their child's school. And more than 99% say their child is safe at their scholarship school.

The state team hosted or participated in more than one dozen events to engage the community in support of school choice, including the popular School Choice Youth Night and the Riding Your Way to Success outreach events.



Mississippi

AFC supported our partner organization, Empower Mississippi, in an effort to make the current Special Needs ESA program universal. Though the bill advanced out of the Senate committee, it never received a floor vote. However, efforts to add a provision to state law clarifying funding for the existing program, preventing further uncertainty, were successful.

This year Empower Mississippi worked to build grassroots support for school choice and sponsored the largest National School Choice Week rally in state history. They also coordinated a luncheon for the release of a study highlighting the economic impact of school choice, featuring Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves.

Mississippi School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
623	900	1,523



Students gather for the National School Choice Week rally.

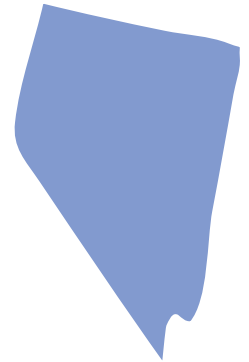
Nevada School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
2,083	46,000	48,083



Hergit Llenas, Director of Latino Grassroots Mobilization and Advocacy, and Valeria Gurr, Nevada State Director, pose with civil rights leader, Rev. H.K. Matthews, at an event to promote educational choice.

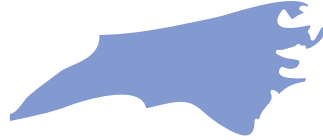
Nevada



The Nevada Legislature meets only every other year. As the AFC Nevada team prepares for the 2019 session, the legislative priority is to make the one-time \$20 million addition to the Opportunity Scholarship Program permanent, so that students already using the program can continue to do so, while also maintaining the 10% annual escalator that will give additional students access to scholarships.

AFC is also working to build relationships with lawmakers from both parties ahead of future efforts to expand school choice for children with disabilities and to fund the state's ESA program.

This year alone, AFC hosted and participated in more than 45 events to promote school choice. AFC launched monthly Parents for Choice talks to help families learn about educational options in the community, and further established strong relationships with diverse stakeholder groups, including the Urban League and a new congregation of African American pastors.



North Carolina

Working with our partners in North Carolina, AFC helped secure funding for the Children with Disabilities Grant program. Each year, more than 400 children sit on a waitlist to participate in the program due to a lack of funding. By adding \$3 million in funding, an additional 375 students will be eligible to receive grants this fall.

Additional steps were taken to protect and grow the Special Needs ESA, first passed in 2017. Previously, students already attending private school were ineligible, regardless of need.

AFC will continue to push back against the governor's threats to dismantle the Opportunity Scholarship Program in North Carolina, which serves more than 5,000 students, all of whom are from lower-income families.

AFC's partner Parents for Educational Freedom in North Carolina hosted a series of forums where state senators, program administrators, and disability advocates addressed more than 200 attendees on the need for scholarship programs for students with special needs. These forums, and the grassroots work that followed, were instrumental in expanding North Carolina's Special Needs ESA program.

North Carolina School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
8,455	104,900	113,355



Darrell Allison, AFC's Director of State Teams and Political Strategy, meets with stakeholders at an event to discuss educational choice.



Ohio School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
49,132	115,400	164,532



The Fife family visits Representative Kyle Koehler at the State Capitol.

Ohio

AFC’s priority in Ohio continues to be combining the state’s multiple school choice programs into a single, income-based state scholarship program called the Ohio Opportunity Scholarship. During numerous committee hearings, parents, students, and school leaders testified in support of the new scholarship. Defenders of the status quo continue to fight this effort, using every tactic possible to prevent families from accessing alternative educational options.

Once again, the Income-Based Scholarship Program was oversubscribed in 2018. For the third consecutive year, the Ohio Department of Education received more applications than scholarships available. AFC will continue to advocate for increased funding for this program to meet student needs.

This year, the Fife family from Ohio won the grand prize in the nationwide Choices in Education video contest, hosted by our school choice ally the Foundation for Excellence in Education. AFC hosted the Fife family for an Advocacy Day at the Ohio State Capitol, where they shared their story with several legislators and attended Senate session during National School Choice Week.



Oklahoma

In 2018 AFC played a role in several efforts to expand educational options to families in Oklahoma: expanding the special needs scholarship to include students already attending private schools; expanding options to homeless students, children of incarcerated adults, and students with substance abuse problems; increasing the tax credit cap from \$5 million to \$10 million; and creating an Educational Savings Account program.

Unfortunately, each effort was thwarted at the end of session by teacher strikes. Instead, multiple special sessions were called to raise taxes to increase teacher salaries rather than expanding educational options. AFC will continue to fight to give families more high-quality educational options in 2019 and beyond.

The 2018 School Choice Day at the Capitol attracted the largest crowd in the event's history. AFC's local allies at School Choice Matters also held a series of successful events to educate parents about their educational options.

Oklahoma School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
3,102	29,000	32,102



Students attend School Choice Day at the Ohio State Capitol.



Tennessee School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
88	42,900	42,988



Families gather at the Tennessee Federation for Children's back-to-school giveaway.

Tennessee

AFC worked to build and strengthen relationships in support of school choice in Tennessee in 2018. With the largest number of legislative retirements in Tennessee history occurring this year, AFC seeks to maintain and grow support for school choice in the General Assembly, with special focus on the Tennessee House where previous efforts to pass legislation were thwarted by the Speaker. Pending positive election results this year, which will include a new House Speaker, AFC is poised to move robust private school legislation in 2019.

AFC is also working to make sure eligible families know about the Tennessee Individual Education Account program, a program for special needs students enacted in 2015.

On the ground, AFC met with groups of independent school leaders, business and civic leaders, and parents in several key cities across the state in an effort to both educate and mobilize Tennesseans in support of robust school choice legislation. AFC is primarily engaged with families who would benefit from meaningful school choice programs and holds monthly workshops that offer information and fellowship for parents.

The Tennessee Federation for Children hosted a back-to-school giveaway at Makeda's Homemade Butter Cookies in Memphis, where more than 100 children received backpacks filled with school supplies.



Washington, D.C.

The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) completed its 14th year providing D.C. students from lower-income families access the city’s private schools. Thanks to AFC’s work in getting \$20 million in previously appropriated carryover funds released last year, enrollment for 2017–18 grew by more than 500 students, and the program now serves nearly 1,700 students. The program continues to be among the strongest federal investments in K–12 education. Over the last six years, an average of 93% of OSP 12th graders graduated high school, and 90% of those graduates enrolled in college.

This year AFC’s legislative objective was to secure additional funding and make technical corrections to strengthen the program. Additional funding is needed because most of the previously appropriated carryover funds are going to providing new scholarships. Therefore, the annual appropriation must increase to accommodate the new scholarship students and to add additional students in the 2019–20 school year. At this time, the House and Senate are completing work on the funding bills that include the OSP. Those bills must be reconciled before Congress completes work on the Fiscal Year 2019 budget.

Washington, D.C. School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017–18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017–18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
1,653	43,800	45,453



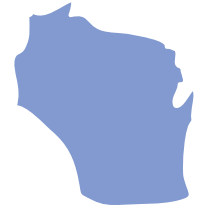
A D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program student and his parents visit U.S. Senator Ron Johnson's office on Capitol Hill.

Wisconsin School Choice Enrollment

PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT 2017-18	ESTIMATED CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 2017-18	TOTAL ESTIMATED
36,495	43,700	80,195



AFC's Wisconsin State Director, Justin Moralez, testifies in support of the proposed ESA program for gifted and talented students.

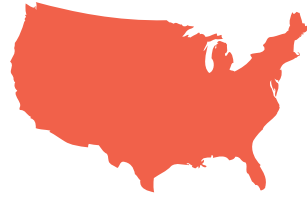
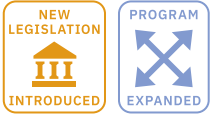


Wisconsin

After last year's victories to grow school choice programs in Wisconsin by expanding the eligibility pool for the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program and the Special Needs Scholarship Program, this year's session was relatively quiet.

AFC's effort to pass an ESA for gifted and talented students, which would have been the first of its kind in the country, had strong bipartisan support but still stalled in committee. The bill would have given lower-income students access to limited funds (\$1,000 per year) for outside services to meet their high-level learning needs. We will continue to promote this legislation, which would help level the playing field for lower-income children.

Much of AFC's advocacy efforts in Wisconsin this year were focused on direct lobbying with legislative leadership. AFC WI has begun building and growing the grassroots database and plans to host informational sessions for families on a regular basis.



Federal Progress

School choice took an important step forward in late 2017 with the expansion of 529 savings accounts to include K–12 expenses. This 529 provision, championed by Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, allows families to use their 529 savings for K–12 expenses and continue to have all account growth be tax free at the federal level.

In 2018, AFC remains focused on passing meaningful federal legislation that would facilitate greater educational opportunity for America’s families and students. We believe that a K–12 tax credit would have the biggest impact for lower-income and working-class families and remain hopeful that it will be included in a second tax bill expected later this year.

AFC also supported legislation that would have provided Education Savings Accounts for students in military families using existing Department of Defense funds. Unfortunately, the proposed funding mechanism—using Impact Aid funding—was flawed, and the bill did not progress. AFC also supported the successful federal funding increase for charter schools and the administration’s unsuccessful effort to set aside nearly \$1.5 billion in federal education dollars for school choice.

This year AFC conducted numerous Capitol Hill events, including a National School Choice Week Capitol Hill rally with the Congressional School Choice Caucus and a Polling and Messaging congressional staff briefing in March 2018. Through AFC’s Voices for Choice program, private school choice student alumni traveled to the Capitol to meet with key legislators and share their powerful stories as a testament to why expanding educational choice is so critical for our country’s youth.



Jennifer Lopez, Ashley Elliott, and Walter Blanks—leaders in AFC’s Student Alumni Network—visit Capitol Hill to share their personal school choice stories.

The American Federation for Children and AFC Growth Fund seek to empower families, especially lower-income families, with the freedom to choose the best K–12 education for their children.

There are 54 publicly funded private school choice programs in 26 states plus D.C. and Puerto Rico.

Private school choice programs are serving approximately 500,000 students today.

Since 2012, enrollment has more than doubled.

AFC's team has helped pass 34 new school choice laws in 18 states since 2009. Over this period, the work of AFC Growth Fund and local allies has produced a 174 percent increase in private school choice program enrollment.



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