

THE Center for Education Reform



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MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OFFER "A CAPITOL CHOICE" FOR DC CHILDREN HOUSE AND SENATE MEMBERS COLLABORATE EFFORTS ON NEW SCHOLARSHIP BILL

WASHINGTON, DC -- Members of the US House and Senate will together announce the introduction of a bill offering the children of the District of Columbia the right to make a choice in their own education and an investment in their future.

Senators Dan Coats [R-IN] and Joseph Lieberman [D-CT] along with Representatives Dick Armeey [R-TX], William Lipinski [D-IL], and Floyd Flake [D-NY] will together announce the introduction of the DC Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997 [DCSOS] today, June 4, at 2:00 p.m. on the West Front steps of the US Capitol.

"These members are leading the charge to offer scholarships or tutoring assistance to low-income DC children to attend the public, private or parochial school of their choice," said Jeanne Allen, president of The Center for Education Reform, "It's a right - not a privilege - for these children to have access to the best education available."

The bi-partisan group of US Senators and Congressmen will re-introduce the school choice pilot program for the District of Columbia that was a show-stopper last year and died under a filibuster from Senator Kennedy. Despite the filibuster, the bill garnered 56 votes last year. This year, some of the 'neases' are gone, and a few more 'yeases' have been counted, so the scene is similar, but many of the actors are new.

"Parents are taking an active role in their children's education," continued Allen, "They're critical of the present state of education, and they want more for their children."

The momentum and activity endorsing public school choice is growing throughout the country, but most recently in places like Lake Travis, TX, Dover-Foxcroft, ME, Chittenden, VT, Fulton County, GA, Lincoln Park, NJ, Baltimore, MD, New York, Pennsylvania, Arizona and Florida. Private sector scholarship programs are already active in 31 states, serving over 20,000 low-income children. And they're so popular that over 15,000 more children are on waiting lists.

"Many have finally conceded that school choice should be an alternative for the less fortunate," concluded Allen, "It's found new friends in high places, and while it may be a battle, our children are worth it."

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